GUIDE TO VIEWING GABE

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SECTION ONE: SETTING THE STAGE

PURPOSE We recommend beginning with a summary of your purposes for using videos for professional development:

- To observe and investigate the practice of teaching
- To begin a reflective discussion with colleagues about the dilemmas and uncertainties of teaching
- To enhance one's own skills of asking questions and diagnosing problems
- To apply these skills to the improvement of teaching and learning in one's own classroom

helpful HINTS

People approach videos with different expectations. Some expect to see a "model" teacher; others think the point is to evaluate whether the teacher is "good" or "bad." It is important to note, however, that these tapes are not intended to represent the best or only way to teach *Humash* or *Tefillah.*

INTRODUCTION TO THE LESSON

(NOTE: The following information about context has been provided as a separate document. You might choose to read this section aloud, or you might opt to distribute it as a hand-out for participants to read on their own.)

THE CONTEXT This video was filmed in a mid-size Reform congregation in an outlying suburb of a large East Coast city. The rabbi and cantor have worked to develop and nourish a spiritual and participatory community, which is evident in all aspects of the congregation's activities. The synagogue school emphasizes "teaching for meaning," as well as student retreats, holiday celebrations, and special events. The school curriculum utilizes textbooks and suggests what to cover when, but allows for teachers' creativity and individual styles in developing the actual lessons. It was developed by the long-time principal in collaboration with her faculty members. The school has 220 students.

THE TEACHER "Gabe" is the congregation's full-time family educator. In addition to coordinating all family programs at the

synagogue, he also teaches the *Gimmel* class, a high school class, and directs the congregation's Saturday morning service for children and young adults.

Gabe is a congregant who credits the synagogue with his Jewish development. Before making a career shift into Jewish education, he was a musician, an executive at a food manufacturing company, and a video store owner. He says that he did not have a positive experience in Hebrew school himself, and he is committed to making Hebrew school a positive experience for his students. Gabe taught at the school for five years before becoming the family educator four years ago. In addition to faculty and communal study in the congregation, Gabe occasionally enrolls in local classes in Hebrew or Jewish subjects. He does not hold a degree in Jewish or general education.

THE CLASS AND LESSON The students in this *Heh* class (5th grade) attend school twice a week for a total of four hours. They spend two hours a week studying Tefillah, which is combined with Hebrew, using *Introduction to the Siddur Volume III: The Amidah, Torah Services and Concluding Prayers* (Torah Aura) as their textbook. The other two hours are spent learning Torah. This is their third year studying these subjects.

In this lesson, the class is learning about the *kedushah* section of the Amidah.

SUMMARY OF THE LESSON AND VIDEO CLIPS This class begins with Gabe putting the word "*kedushah*" on the board (in Hebrew) and asking the students what other words they know that have this word in it. They offer *kidshanu; kadosh; kadesh; kaddish; kodesh; kiddush; kiddush* cup. They spend about 10 minutes practicing reading the text of the *kedushah* out loud, both individually and in groups.

CLIP #1: The clip begins when Gabe asks the class to turn to page 42 in their textbooks, where they are asked to "write down 10 things that you consider holy." After they write their responses individually, Gabe asks students to go around the room and each share an answer, which he then posts them on the board. Their answers include: my sister, survival, Shabbat, Torah, a star of David, God, health, the Earth, myself, freedom, and friend. (end of clip)

BETWEEN CLIP #1 AND #2: Gabe allows students to each share another answer out loud, and their answers include: TV, my hat, my cat, the ability to think for myself, the synagogue, my family, my girlfriend.

When they finish sharing, Gabe asks the students what the items on their lists have in common; the students say things like "They are important to me;" "I respect them;" and "I love them."

CLIP #2: They continue to page 43 of their textbooks, where they read "The Holiness Code" in English, which is drawn from Leviticus 19. A student named Josh comments that much of the text is stated in the negative (i.e., "Do not insult the deaf."), and discussion follows. They also talk about what the text says about being holy. Gabe asks them how the list in Leviticus compares with their own lists. Some students said "sort of the same" and some said "different." A student named Menachem raises his hand and says that he is removing two items (TV and his hat) from his list of what is holy. Gabe talks a little about the difference between important and holy, adding, "I want to respect your lists." (end of clip)

BETWEEN CLIP #2 AND #3: During the remaining time in class, Gabe asks the class why the phrase "I am *Adonai*" is repeated so often. They suggest that it underscores God's importance and ensures that the point is not forgotten. The class studies the concept of *kedushah* as described in the textbook on page 44. The students practice reading the prayer in Hebrew out loud.

BEFORE YOU PLAY THE VIDEO Before you play the video, set the stage by reading aloud the preceding pages or summarizing their information about the context, teacher, and class.

We suggest that you hand out the ancillary materials at this point, explain what they are, and give participants a moment to look them over. For Gabe's lesson, the ancillary materials include:

- background information on the context, teacher, and class
- a transcript of the lesson
- a photo seating chart of Gabe's class
- relevant pages from the textbook being used in class (Torah Aura *Introduction to the Siddur*)
- Gabe's lesson plan
- a transcript of an interview with Gabe

You might want to describe what happens in the lesson prior to the first clip by reading the first paragraph of the transcript aloud.

When you select the video, the first image will remain paused for a few seconds to allow for time for everyone to focus on the screen.

SECTION TWO: FIRST VIEWING –OBSERVATION

PURPOSE The first viewing is aimed at becoming oriented to the classroom and learning how to describe and discuss observations in a non-judgmental way.

Remind participants that the video contains excerpts of a real lesson in a real classroom and is *not* intended to represent the best or only way to teach the subject.

ACTIVITIES

1. OBSERVATION

The video consists of two clips from the lesson (15 minutes total). Note that the transcript includes a brief summary of what takes place between clips. You might want to pause the video between clips to allow participants to read this important information.

Encourage participants to take notes while viewing.

You might want to ask participants to consider the following after viewing:

- What stood out for you?
- What surprised you? Why?
- What questions do you have?

helpful **HINTS**

Participants might notice:

- Gabe and his students interact casually.
- Students work individually in their textbooks.
- Gabe documents students' answers on the board.
- Gabe uses positive reinforcement.
- The lesson builds from the children's ideas to studying a related text about the topic.
- There is an exchange about the difference between holy and important.

2. Moving from Observation to Investigation

Posting Responses

It is always helpful to write participants' responses on flipcharts as they share them with the group. This not only minimizes repetition but also creates an opportunity to discuss different interpretations of various aspects of the lesson. Focusing on the variety in what is noticed and the way in which it is noticed helps participants understand that watching a class is a subjective experience.

For example, in the past, participants have commented on Gabe's tone. Some thought it was sharp at the beginning of class, particularly in moments like the following: "Did you hear me ask that I don't want any talking?"; "Cause I don't want you to influence each other"; and "Are you talkin' still?" Others suggested that his tone appeals to the students and actually creates a comfortable climate in class.

Refining our Observations

There will inevitably be some judgmental or evaluative responses to the video. For example, some people watch Gabe and say, "There is a nice climate in this class," or "It's inappropriate to expect students to be able to give concrete examples of an abstract concept like holiness." If comments like these come up, ask, "Why do you think so?" or "How can you tell?" or "What did you see in the video that led you to make that statement?" or "Can you reframe your statement or question in a descriptive way?"

Either at the end of this portion of the discussion, or as participants inspect the list they have made, ask participants how they would investigate this idea further. This sharpens participants' capacity to understand what can be learned from further observation and examination of the records of practice in front of them. This step is particularly important if you opt to design your own investigative activities based on participants' observations and comments rather than use the lesson plans that we have provided.

PLACING OBSERVATIONS INTO THE TEACHER, LEARNER, AND CONTENT TRIANGLE

One of the strategies in this guide for investigating the dynamics of teaching and learning is to focus on the teacher, the learner, or the content as a starting point and study the lesson from that perspective. This is helpful not only for examining the different elements of a class but also for understanding the very complex way in which these elements interact.

helpful HINTS

You might want to draw a large triangle on the board and mark one corner "T," another "L," and the other "C." Then write each comment in its corresponding place within the triangle. Participants might feel that some comments relate to teacher, learner, or content alone, and, therefore, belong close to the corners, while others seem to indicate a relationship *between* corners and therefore belong along the sides. This diagram might help participants organize the pieces of information that they are gathering about the lesson, as well as to begin to visualize the relationships. The triangle can serve as a map for the investigation as participants further study the lesson in the second viewing.

This discussion will set the stage for the second viewing and investigation, in which participants will view the lesson in terms of the points on the triangle (teacher, learner, content) and the relationships and interactions among them.

TEXT STUDY In this lesson, the class is studying the *kedushah* portion of the *Amidah*. The lesson is drawn from a Torah Aura textbook (see excerpt in ancillary materials). It includes the words of the *kedushah* prayer, which are drawn from verses in Isaiah Chapter 6, Ezekiel 3:12, and Psalms 146:10; and the injunction in Leviticus Chapter 19 to be holy ("*kedoshim tih'yu*"). This text study session focuses on the concept of *kedushah* (holiness) as it is described in the chapters from Isaiah and Leviticus. You will need to prepare the two sets of questions suggested below for use in *hevruta* groups in advance of the session.

***Hevruta* Study: Leviticus 19**

1. Read verses 1-2 in pairs. If you were to read only these verses (and didn't know what came next), what would you imagine the next verses would say?

2. Continue reading through verse 15. What are some examples of *kedushah* (holiness) that appear in this text? How does what you read in the text compare to what you expected to see after reading verses 1-2?

3. Traditionally, one way of categorizing *mitzvot* (commandments) is according to *bein adam l'makom* (commandments about people's behavior toward God) and *bein adam l'chavero* (commandments about people's behavior toward one another). How would you categorize the *mitzvot* listed in this chapter?

4. Based on this chapter, how would you define *kedushah*?

DEBRIEF

After participants have had an opportunity to read the text and consider the questions, discuss the answers together as a group, and post the definitions of *kedushah* that come out of the reading of the text.

helpful HINTS

One possible definition:

In this chapter, the mitzvot are *bein adam l'chavero*. In order to be *kadosh* (holy) like God, one must behave a certain way toward others. *Kedushah* is achieved through the ethical behavior prescribed by the text.

***Hevruta* Study: Isaiah Chapter 6**

In this chapter, Isaiah describes his prophetic vision. You will notice that some of the verses of the *kedushah* prayer are drawn from this text.

1. Read Isaiah Chapter 6 in pairs. What does Isaiah see? What does he hear? What does he experience? What does he say? Why do you think he says that?

2. How would you describe the idea of *kedushah* as expressed in this text?

helpful HINTS

***Kedushah* according to Isaiah:**

In Isaiah's vision, angelic beings are proclaiming God as *kadosh*. This idea of holiness is a quality of God that is abstract, mystical, and difficult to explain.

DEBRIEF

As a group, share and post impressions of these texts. How did you define *kedushah* from the perspective of each of these texts? How do they differ?

SECTION THREE: SECOND VIEWING –TAKING AN INVESTIGATIVE STANCE TOWARD TEACHING AND LEARNING

PURPOSE Taking an investigative stance toward teaching and learning involves a number of steps: investigation, analysis and reflection, and application to practice. The second viewing of the video allows for a more careful study of the components of the lesson and their dynamic relationship. By examining interactions among teacher, learner, and content within a particular context, we can begin to further develop our ideas about teaching and learning in general, and consider how these new insights might shed light on our own teaching. In this section, we also draw upon additional records of practice to lead us to new discoveries about teaching and learning.

ACTIVITIES

1. INVESTIGATION

View the video with an eye toward studying specific questions about the teacher, learners, or content.

Here are a number of possible ways to approach this viewing:

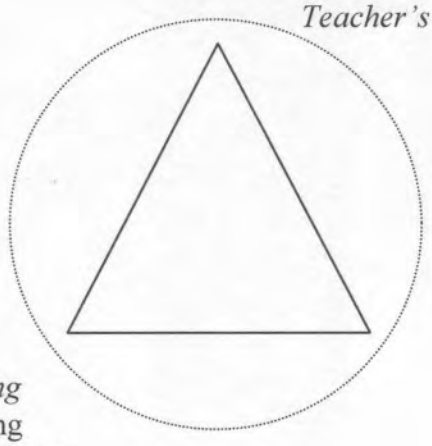
- **Follow the investigations that we have provided in this section.** Beginning on page 13 you will find three examples of how investigations of some of the key issues in Gabe's lesson might be conducted from the perspective of teacher, learner, and content. This video is particularly instructive for studying and discussing the questions that appear. You might also choose to ask participants to work in small groups, each conducting one of the investigations and reporting back to the larger group during the debriefings.

- **Investigate further what participants noticed in the first viewing**. Build on participants' responses to the first viewing by investigating moments or issues of their choosing. (For example, participants might want to investigate the climate of the classroom and the relationship between Gabe and his students; or participants might choose to investigate the distinction made between "holy" and "important" in class.)

- **Design your own investigation around the corners of the triangle**. Design your own investigative viewing from the perspective of teacher, learner, or content. A list of topics that you might investigate appears around the triangle below; the italics indicate the topic that we discuss in the coming pages.

TEACHER

Teacher's Strategies for Facilitating Student Learning
Teacher's Goals
Navigating Student Questions and Comments



LEARNER

Student Learning
Student Thinking
Student Engagement

CONTENT

DEBRIEF

Following are guidelines for debriefing at each step. If you decide to have different members of the group conduct separate investigations, you might think about using the following strategy for allowing the group to debrief together:

- Share and post observations and questions. One way to do this is to ask each group to write their comments on either poster board or flipcharts and then have a representative of the group explain the written material.
- Study the items noted by each group. Several different questions could frame this analysis, including:
  1. Are there any issues that overlap?
  2. Are there significant moments in common to all three investigations?

The next steps in this second viewing, ask participants to follow up on their investigation, examining additional materials and reflecting on their own practice. After each of the next two phases, you might again want to collectively debrief.

2. Analysis and Reflection

Examine other records of practice, as well as our own experiences, and reflect on the implications for practice.

3. Application to the Practice of Teaching

Translate what we have learned into what we do in our own classrooms.

Examples of how these activities might play out begin on the next page.

INVESTIGATION OF
TEACHER

L C

TEACHER'S STRATEGIES FOR FACILITATING STUDENT LEARNING

What strategies or methods does the teacher employ in his teaching to facilitate the lesson? Does the teacher use any particular strategies to facilitate discussion or elicit student participation or ideas? What is the pattern of interactions between the teacher and the students in the class?

1. STRATEGY FOR INVESTIGATION

A few suggestions for how to identify Gabe's strategies for encouraging student learning (as they appear in the lesson):

- Track and describe the different activities that Gabe employs in the lesson.
- Look for key moments when students appear to be learning, and try to find evidence of what the teacher has done to facilitate that learning.
- Identify some key interactions between Gabe and his students. How would you describe those interactions?

helpful **HINTS**

Participants might notice:

- Students write their own answers and then share.
- Each student must answer when going around the room.
- Gabe is accepting of students' answers and offers praise.
- Children seem comfortable in class; they speak openly.
- Gabe follows the textbook closely.
- Gabe is willing to say, "I don't know."

Debrief

Ask participants to share and compare their findings. How do the strategies that were identified facilitate student learning?

Participants will probably notice Gabe's acceptance of students' ideas, as well as his use of praise. You might want to discuss how one can balance the desire to accept and validate students' ideas with the need to clarify or define a concept.

2. Analysis and Reflection

Examine other records of practice, as well as our own experiences, and reflect on the implications for practice.

A. Read the interview with Gabe. Consider how he tells the story of his own journey to becoming a Jewish educator and the strategies he uses in class to facilitate student learning. In what ways do you think his background and experience shape his attitude or approach to religious school, the lesson, and his students?

B. Research in teacher education has shown that prior learning and personal beliefs shape the way one teaches. How do you think your own background and past experience have shaped your approach to teaching and your strategies for facilitating student learning?

3. Application to the Practice of Teaching

Translate what we have learned into what we do in our own classrooms.

Suggest ways for participants to investigate and test their own strategies for facilitating learning in their classrooms. You might ask participants to reflect upon their past experiences when planning their next lessons, and to consider how these experiences shape their strategies for facilitating student learning. Suggest that they ask themselves what they might do more of and what else they might change.

INVESTIGATION OF
LEARNER

T C

STUDENT LEARNING What evidence do you see of student learning? What seems to contribute to their learning? Can you trace a progression or transformation in students' ideas from the beginning of the clip to the end? What new knowledge or ideas do you think they will take away from this class?

This is a lesson that builds from students' ideas and experiences to the study of traditional Jewish texts. It provides a window into what students think holiness is and what they learn when they encounter a Biblical text that deals with the idea of holiness.

1. STRATEGY FOR INVESTIGATION

Finding evidence of what and how students have learned in any lesson is not easy. To investigate what and how they learn about holiness in this lesson, track the progression of students' ideas about holiness from the beginning of the video to the end. Look for the activities, interactions, questions, and experiences that seem to "push" their learning, and pinpoint the moments when you think you see it happen.

Student learning can be explored by asking participants to focus on individual students and comparing their insights during the debriefing. Ask participants to study students' comments and questions, and to try to identify key learning moments by observing their interactions with their teacher, other learners, and the text. Some suggested students to track:

- Josh
- Hannah
- Max (also called Menachem. Note: the summary information on pages 3-4 of the transcript contains additional responses from Max about what he thinks is holy, which are informative for studying him.)
- Drew

DEBRIEF

Share and compare your findings. Describe key moments for each student's learning. Can you make general observations about student learning that apply to all of them? Can you make observations about student learning that are unique to individual students?

2. ANALYSIS AND REFLECTION

Examine other records of practice, as well as our own experiences, and reflect on the larger implications for our practice.

A. How does learning happen in this lesson?

Study the list of what students consider holy, comparing the answers students offer in the first round to the additional answers that they give. (Note: The video shows only the first round; the additional answers have been included in the transcript; see page 4.) What differences do you notice between the first set and the second set? How do you account for them?

helpful HINTS

Participants might notice that the first set includes traditional Jewish answers like Shabbat; the second set includes more personal ideas like "my hat" and "my cat."

Starting with the learners' ideas and building on them is a particular learning strategy that Gabe uses in his class. In general, what are the possible benefits and challenges inherent in this approach? Reflecting on what you have already noticed, what do you think students have learned by the end of the lesson? How can you tell? What could you ask students so as to find out what they have learned?

B. Describe some key moments of learning that you have experienced or facilitated in your class. What was your students' original understanding of the subject? How did the learning happen? How could you tell?

3. Application to the Practice of Teaching

Translate what we have learned into what we do in our own classrooms.

Suggest ways that participants can investigate how students learn in their own classrooms. You could ask them to pay attention this week to what students seem to know at the beginning of each lesson in comparison to what they know at the end. What seems to contribute to the students' learning? How do you find out what they have learned?

INVESTIGATION OF
CONTENT

T L

CONTENT INVESTIGATION What appears to be the focus of this lesson? What are the significant Jewish ideas encountered in the lesson? How are they developed by the teacher and students? What would be useful for a teacher to know in order to teach the content of this lesson? What about this content is important for students to learn?

1. STRATEGY FOR INVESTIGATION

Trace the development of the idea of *kedushah* in this lesson from the beginning of the video to the end, pointing to particular comments and questions that reveal the development. As you proceed, consider the following:

- What different ideas or definitions of *kedushah* appear during the lesson, and at what points?
- What happens when students compare their lists of what they think is holy to the text of Leviticus that they read from the textbook?
- How would you characterize the ideas about *kedushah* as they appear in the beginning of the lesson versus the end? How are the ideas about holiness developed by the teacher and the students during the course of the lesson?

DEBRIEF

Share and post the participants' findings. One way to organize the ideas that the group notices could be to draw a timeline of the class, and then plot the points on the timeline when an idea about holiness is raised. This would create a visual representation of the progression of the idea of holiness in this lesson from beginning to end. The timeline might begin with Gabe putting the word "*kedushah*" in Hebrew on the board.

2. ANALYSIS AND REFLECTION

Examine other records of practice, as well as our own experiences, and reflect on the larger implications for our practice.

A. Consider the development of the idea of *kedushah* in this lesson in light of your own understanding of *kedushah*, based on your study of the Biblical sources. What are the implications for the teaching of the concept of holiness and the *kedushah* prayer? What would be helpful for a teacher to know in order to teach the *kedushah* prayer?

B. Think about the textbook that you use in your class. What sources might you bring to class to complement the textbook and enrich the learning in your class? What outside resources might be helpful for enhancing your knowledge of the subject matter? Where could you access them?

3. Application to the Practice of Teaching

Translate what we have learned into what we do in our own classrooms.

Suggest ways in which participants can investigate these content issues in their own classrooms and translate what has been discussed here into their own settings. You could say, "As you plan your next lesson, think about how you will use your textbook and what you can add to it to enrich the content of the lesson. Identify what you need to know and where you can find the resources you need. Try to integrate those resources into your lesson."

Gabe's Class
Background Information

The Setting of the Classroom

These video clips were filmed in a mid-size Reform congregation in an outlying suburb of a large East Coast city. The congregation has capped its membership. The rabbi and cantor have worked to develop and nourish a spiritual and participatory community, which is evident in all aspects of the congregation's activities. Likewise, the synagogue school emphasizes "teaching for meaning" and student retreats, holiday celebrations, and special events. The school curriculum was developed by the long-time principal in collaboration with her faculty members. It is fully outlined but allows for teachers' creativity and individual styles. The school has 220 students.

The students in this Heh class (5th grade) attend school twice a week for a total of four hours. They spend two hours a week studying Tefillah, which is combined with Hebrew, using *Introduction to the Siddur Volume III: The Amidah, Torah Services and Concluding Prayers* (Torah Aura) as their textbook. The other two hours are spent learning Torah. This is their third year studying these subjects.

Gabe's Background

Gabe is the congregation's full-time family educator. In addition to coordinating all family programs at the synagogue, he also teaches the Gimmel class, a high school class, and directs *kehilat no'ar*, the congregation's Saturday morning service for children and young adults.

Gabe is a congregant who credits the congregation with his Jewish development. Before making a career shift into Jewish education, he was a musician, an executive at a food manufacturing company, and a video store owner. He says that he did not have a positive experience in Hebrew school himself and he is committed to making Hebrew school a positive experience for his students. Gabe taught at the school for five years before becoming the family educator four years ago. In addition to faculty and communal study in the congregation, Gabe occasionally enrolls in local classes in Hebrew or on Jewish subjects. He does not hold a degree in Jewish or general education.

Miriam
Miriam

Dana
Avi

Hannah
Chanah

Nina
Nina Leah

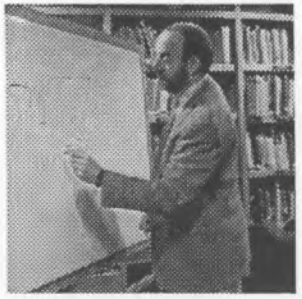
Michelle
Pnina

Gabe's Class Seating Chart

Will
Avigdor

Eric
Ezekiel

Drew
David



Gabe
Gavriel

Max
Menachem

Josh
Yehoshua

Ben
Binyamin

Gabe Class Transcript

*This class begins with Gabe putting the word "*kedushah*" on the board (in Hebrew) and asking the students what other words they know that have this word in it. They* offer kidshanu; kadosh; kadesh; kaddish; kodesh; kiddush; kiddush *cup. They spend about 10 minutes practicing reading the text of the* kedushah *out loud, individually and in groups. We enter the class when they turn to an exercise about the meaning of holiness, which is found in their textbook on page 42.*

Clip #1

Gabe: Please turn to page 42, and before we discuss it any further, I want you on your own to write down 10 things which you consider holy.

Students: God! Hot dogs! ….ah…a pet! ... Number 1…

Gabe: Please, no talking, I don't want you to influence each other in what you're going to write. *[hands out pencils]* These are new pencils; I don't think there are any…

Student: Cool.

Gabe: Okay, you have two minutes to write down your list of 10.

Student: Can you write yourself?

Student: I already did!

Gabe: You're going to write my—me?

Student: No, I already wrote me. I wrote me.

Gabe: Did you hear me ask that I don't want any talking? 'Cause I don't want you to influence one another. I know, but I want you to write your own. I don't—I have a reason.

Menachem: What if… Can you spell something wrong?

Gabe: I always spell stuff wrong.

Josh: It doesn't matter? Any kind of holy?

Gabe: Are you talking still?

Josh: No.

Gabe: We're not talking about a holy like…We got a couple of "his shirts" in the last class. I don't want that.

Josh: Couple of what?

Gabe: People wrote, "your shirt." It's not w-h- or h-o-l-e, like having holes in it.

Josh: Oh.

Gabe: Oh. Ha, ha, ha.

Josh: Like on the retreat…

Gabe: Yeah, okay. Anybody need more time?

Students: Yeah… Yes… Yeah, I do!

Gabe: Okay.

Hannah: I've been listening to you!

Student: Yeah!

Gabe: Don't. Don't. Not a good idea.

[tapping, whistling, knocking, students writing and erasing, as they work on completing the exercise]

Gabe: Is this easy?

Students: No. No... Yes… Un Uh...

Gabe: Good.

Nina: It gets harder as you go down… Yeah and….

Gabe: Um Hmm. Okay.

[Students continue to write, working on the exercise.]

Gabe: *[talking softly with Drew]* That was a great answer.

Gabe: Who needs more time?

Student: Me… One more…

Gabe: Okay, you know what?

Josh: Please, it'll take me one second…I'm just writing the parentheses for the last one.

Student: What is essence?

Gabe: Say what?

Student: What is essence?

Gabe: I didn't ask you to do Part 2 yet.

Student: Oh.

Student: Woops!

Gabe: Okay, I just wanted the 10 things.

Josh: What if we're on the last thing?

Gabe: Just relax… Okay. Go around the room and just give me one thing that you think from your list that you want to put down as what you think is holy.

Menachem: Can we pass?

Gabe: Huh?

Menachem: Can we pass?

Josh: I can't decide on one….

Gabe: I'd rather you don't. Just pick one, any one. We're going to start off with Avi.

Avi: Oh… Oh…my sister?

Gabe: Okay…

[Gabe writes students' answers on the whiteboard as they give them.]

Hannah: Survival.

Gabe: Survival is holy. That's really interesting. Nina?

Nina: *Shabbat.*

Gabe: *Shabbat*. Okay, P'nina?

P'nina: The Torah.

Menachem: Star of David.

Gabe: Star of David. Okay, Josh?

Josh: Uhhhh, God? But, it, well, it's a different kind of God. But I can't explain it, so just how about my blankie? I can't explain the kind of God I mean.

Gabe: Your blankie?

Students: *[laughter]*

Gabe: Can I put your lovie?[1]

Josh: Yeah.

Gabe: Okay.

Ben: Are we going to go again?

Gabe: Nope.

Student: God…

Ben: Health.

Gabe: Health. Great list. Yep. Drew?

Drew: Oh. Ummmm, the earth!

Gabe: Okay, the earth...

Students: *[whispering]*

Student: Can't see….

Gabe: Planets.

Ezekiel: Ummmm, the Torah?

---

[1] In this school, when students go on their first retreat in third grade, they are told to bring a "lovie," an object from home that makes them feel comfortable and secure, like a favorite doll or a blanket. The term is part of the school culture.

Gabe: We got the Torah.

Student: *[laughs]*

Eric: Okay. Ummmm, myself.

Gabe: Wow.

Student: You got that from Dana!

Student: Haaa!

Eric: No.

Dana: I didn't write that.

Eric: No, I wrote it in here.

Gabe: You know…

Student: Okay.

Gabe: … it's okay if more than one person has the same thing.

Josh: Can we go around twice?

Avigdor: Freedom.

Gabe: Freedom? Okay.

Josh: Can we go around twice, or three times or four times each?

Miriam: My friends.

Gabe: Friends.

[Gabe goes around the room a second time and students offer additional items from their lists: "my hat," "TV," "my cat," "the ability to think for myself," "my family," "my girlfriend." Josh attempts to explain his original answer, "God"; Gabe translates what he says into "miracle-maker," and Josh agrees to it. Gabe asks them to consider what the items on their lists have in common. They take a moment to write their answers and then they go around the room and share. Most of the students say the same things: "They are important to me;" "I love them;" "I respect them;" "I would never try to hurt them." He then asks them to write down what their lists have in common. Then they read

from the text on page 43, "The Holiness Code" which is drawn from Leviticus Chapter 19:

Clip #2

Nina: "You shall be…You shall be…*kodushim*"

Gabe: *Kede—kedoshim*

Nina: *Kedoshim*, "Because I *Adonai* your God am, am kadosh. Each of you shall be in awe of her mother and father. And all of you shall keep my *Shabbatot*. I am *Adonai*. Do not turn to idols and do not make molten Gods. I am *Adonai* your God. When you harvest your land, don't take the corners of the field. Don't gather the gleanings, don't collect the fallen grapes, leave them for the poor and the stranger. I am *Adonai* your God. Do not steal, do not cheat, do not lie to one another. Do not lie in an oath using my name and profane thereby the name of your God. I am *Adonai*. Do not defraud your neighbor. Do not rob. Do not hold back the wages of the laborer until the next morning. Do not insult the deaf. Do not place an obstacle before the blind. You shall be in awe of your God. I am *Adonai*."

Josh: It didn't say to do anything. It just said to don't do something.

Menachem: It said—

Hannah: Yeah, it said keep the Shabbatot!

Gabe: Okay, hang on…

Josh: It said so many more things to do—not to do, than to do. Like seven more or eight more.

Michelle: Because most people know, like, something is wrong.

Gabe: Would you say stealing is a positive thing or a negative thing?

Josh: No, but you could say something—some good things.

Gabe: Hang on. Is stealing good or neg—bad?

Josh: It's bad.

Gabe: So if you're saying don't steal it's a ba—it's not doing a bad thing, which means…

Hannah: You're doing—it's a good thing.

Josh: Yeah, I know but there's more, the, that He, I'm sure—

Michelle: How come there was—

Josh: God could have—whoever wrote this could have thought of more things to say that were good that you could do.

Gabe: Okay. Excellent.

Josh: I know there are more good things.

Michelle: Who said the word 'not' had to be bad?

Gabe: According to this list what kind of things are holy? What's the common thread in these things? Avi?

Avi: Not to like do, like, things to other people that would like, um… I don't know how to say this…

Hannah: I do…

Gabe: Okay. Let her…come on…

Avi: That would either, like, hurt them or...

Gabe: Not do other things that would hurt other people. Okay. Josh?

Avi: And why does it keep on repeating…*Adonai*?

Gabe: I'll come back to that.

Student: So we know that…

Gabe: I'll come back to that.

Josh: I have two things. Okay, this is sorta like respect others and respect yourself, too.

Gabe: Okay. Great!

Josh: And then wait, um, instead of saying, "Do not insult the deaf," it could have said, "Be kind to the deaf."

Gabe: It could have.

Josh: Because—because you might not be insulting the deaf, but you may not do anything for them. You might just sit there and let them be how they are instead of helping them.

Student: Some people would rather be that way.

Gabe: Excellent. Excellent. Good. So it's not just like I thought at first. It's not just being negative-negative. It's saying to you not to do something bad doesn't say that you're going to necessarily do something good. Is that what you were getting at?

Josh: Um hmm.

Gabe: Excellent. All right, Avigdor?

Avigdor: Well it's, like, treat other people you want—like you want to be treated.

Gabe: Okay, so…

Avigdor: If you were blind, then treat a blind person like you were blind.

Gabe: Nina?

Nina: Well, it sort of says that being holy is giving yourself, part of yourself and part of your things, to other people who don't necessarily have as much as you. Like the "don't take the corner of your fields," and "don't take your fallen grapes" and stuff.

Gabe: Okay. So one of the common threads, if I may say, 'cause of what you're all saying is—is that being holy has to do with between you and what?

Students: God….God …

Gabe: God and what?

Nina: Other people.

Gabe: Other people. Aren't all these things that have to do with other people?

Avi: Yes, it's just about people, not about things—like the things, like the Earth, or…

Gabe: Right, it talks about other people. But—not cheat—

Avi: —like things—

Gabe: Okay, when it talks about not taking the corners of your field, as Nina Leah just said, it's talking about giving food or something to somebody else. Right? Yep?

Josh: But um, I think someone said, um, that it doesn't have to do with something with the Earth. But in a way it does, because if you're mean to the Earth, you're sort of defying, you're sort of, like, umm, holding obstacles with someone else. If you're destroying the Earth, that could hurt someone else…

Gabe: Okay.

Josh: …as long as yourself.

Gabe: All right. So according to this list, the kinds of things that are holy are things that have to do with other people. Right? Taking care of other people.

Students: Right.

Gabe: Okay. How does this list compare with your list?

Hannah: Different.

Gabe: Is it the same, is it different? How is it different?

Students: Different.
Way Different.
Same.

Hannah: Some of it's the same.

Avi: It's all about, like, people.

Gabe: Write down your answer first; think about it.

[Class writes down answers to question.]

Gabe: Shhh…

Gabe: Anybody need more time?

Students: Yeah. No. No. Yes.

Gabe: Okay…

Gabe: Anybody say that the lists were the same? In any way at all?

Students: Nooo. Sort of… Nnyyeah…

Hannah: I said sort of—

Michelle: My first two words are…

Gabe: Hold on, Michelle. How so, Hannah?

Hannah: Well, because mine—my list is sort of about making things better for other people, but it's sort of about making things better for yourself.

Gabe: Okay. P'nina?

P'nina: Um, my first two words are WAY DIFFERENT in big capital letters with a bunch of exclamation points.

Nina: Way different…way different.

Gabe: So, they're not close?

P'nina: No, I mean no, they're not close.

Gabe: Yep?

Avigdor: Well, should I say how they are the same? Just because they were good things, I mean that, um, there weren't any bad things.

Gabe: Okay. We're going to look at this list again—at the last lesson when we do the *Kedusha*—and see how our lists—see whether or not our lists—of things that we think are holy changes or not, and see what the common—what the common thread is in each of them.

Gabe: Now let's get back to, um, I think Michelle's question.

Student: What was it? Oh yeah.

Gabe: Why does it keep saying, "I am—

Hannah: That was Dana's question, I think.

Gabe: It was several of your questions, okay? Why does it keep repeating, "I am *Adonai* your God"? Menachem?

Menachem: Well, I have something different than the answer.

Gabe: Does it have to do with my question?

Menachem: No. But it has to do with the holy thing.

Gabe: That I didn't get to you first?

Menachem: No. No.

Gabe: All right, go for it.

Menachem: I take the TV and the hat off the holy list.

Gabe: You do? You no longer think they're holy?

Menachem: Well, they're holy to me, but not in this thing.

Gabe: But do you want to tell us why you thought they were holy?

Menachem: Well, I watch TV, and I wear my hat mostly every day, so they're important. I don't know...

Gabe: Okay. You know what, kids?

Student: Do you respect them?

Gabe: Umm, the reason I said we're going to come back to the list again is because there are lot of things that are important, but they're not necessarily holy. But they could still be important. And I haven't thought about it a lot, but probably everything that's holy you could say is important. But I don't know that everything that is important is necessarily holy.

But I want to re—I want to respect your lists—and just like at first when I saw Drew writing down all the names of different planets, my first reaction was to say stop fooling around, you know, just write planets. But his answer to me when I asked him, "What are you doing?" he said, "They're part of God's creations, and God's creations are holy." Who I am to tell him that the list is wrong?

During the remaining time in class, Gabe asks the class why the phrase "I am Adonai*" is repeated so often. They suggest that it underscores God's importance and ensures that the point is not forgotten. The class studies the concept of* kedushah *as described in the textbook on page 44. The students practice reading the prayer in Hebrew out loud.*

Introduction to the Siddur

Vol. 3: The Amidah, The Torah Service & The Concluding Prayers

by

Debi M. Rowe

from material developed by Joel Lurie Grishaver

Illustrations by Joel Lurie Grishaver

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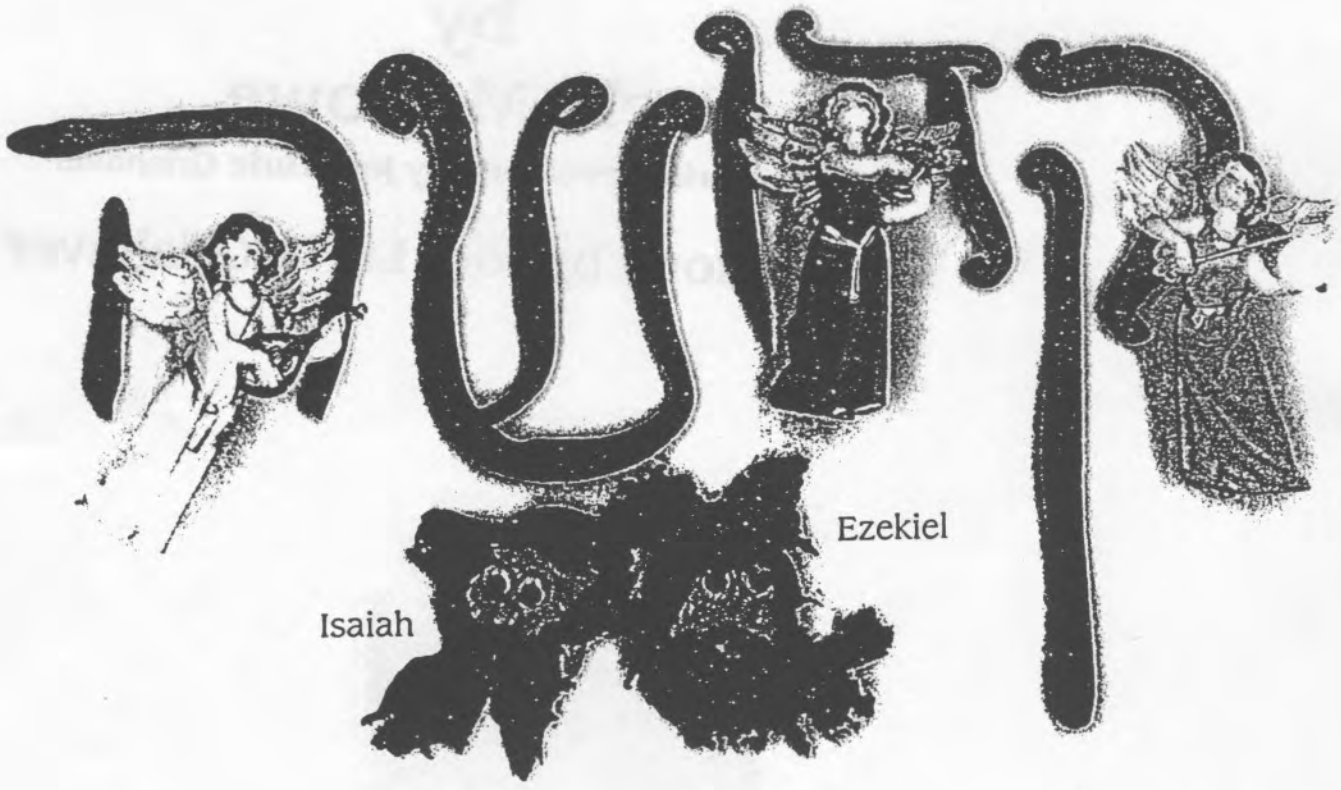
LESSON 10
קְדֻשָּׁה (The Third בְּרָכָה)



The third prayer in the עֲמִידָה is the קְדֻשָּׁה. Its name comes from the Hebrew root [קדש]. קָדוֹשׁ means "holy." קִדּוּשׁ is the בְּרָכָה said over wine at the beginning of Shabbat and the Festivals which recognizes God's holiness. The קַדִּישׁ is an Aramaic prayer which is said at various points in a traditional service and which is also said by mourners. It, too, talks about God's קְדֻשָּׁה, God's holiness.

God is holy. Holy is a hard word to define. It seems to be more of a sense or a feeling, bu
we know that God is holy, and that things which are close to God are also holy.

Use this text to practice reading or chanting the קְדֻשָּׁה. *Every lesson on the* קְדֻשָּׁה *should begin with a practice session using this page.*

1. נְקַדֵּשׁ אֶת שִׁמְךָ בָּעוֹלָם,
2. כְּשֵׁם שֶׁמַּקְדִּישִׁים אוֹתוֹ בִּשְׁמֵי מָרוֹם,
3. כַּכָּתוּב עַל יַד נְבִיאֶךָ:
4. וְקָרָא זֶה אֶל זֶה וְאָמַר:
5. **קָדוֹשׁ, קָדוֹשׁ, קָדוֹשׁ יהוה צְבָאוֹת,**
6. **מְלֹא כָל הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ:** Isaiah 6:3
7. אַדִּיר אַדִּירֵנוּ, יהוה אֲדֹנֵינוּ, מַה־אַדִּיר שִׁמְךָ בְּכָל־הָאָרֶץ!
8. **בָּרוּךְ כְּבוֹד יהוה מִמְּקוֹמוֹ:** Ezekiel 3:12
9. אֶחָד הוּא אֱלֹהֵינוּ, הוּא אָבִינוּ, הוּא מַלְכֵּנוּ, הוּא מוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ;
10. וְהוּא יַשְׁמִיעֵנוּ בְּרַחֲמָיו לְעֵינֵי כָּל־חָי: אֲנִי יהוה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם!
11. **יִמְלֹךְ יהוה לְעוֹלָם,**
12. **אֱלֹהַיִךְ צִיּוֹן**
13. **לְדֹר וָדֹר, הַלְלוּיָהּ:** Psalms 146:10
14. לְדוֹר וָדוֹר נַגִּיד גָּדְלֶךָ
15. וּלְנֵצַח נְצָחִים קְדֻשָּׁתְךָ נַקְדִּישׁ,
16. וְשִׁבְחֲךָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִפִּינוּ לֹא יָמוּשׁ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.
17. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יהוה
18. הָאֵל הַקָּדוֹשׁ.

In the traditional and Reform siddurim, several different versions of the קְדֻשָּׁה (plus or minus lines from this text) are used during a service. To focus in on other versions of the קְדֻשָּׁה, use your congregational siddur.

What is Holy?

List **ten things** which you consider holy:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

What do all of these things have in common? What is the "essence" of the way you see holiness?

_____

_____

The Holiness Code

This text comes from the heart of the book of Leviticus (yes, the third book in the Torah)—chapter 19 to be specific. It is a very famous portion and is often called "The Holiness Code." It is a list of things which God considers to be holy.

Read it and contrast it with yours.

You shall be קְדֹשִׁים, because, I, יהוה, Your God, am קָדוֹשׁ .
Each of you shall be **in awe of her mother and father,**
and all of you shall **keep My Shabbatot**. I am יהוה.
Do not turn to idols and **do not make molten gods**.
I am יהוה your God...
When you harvest your land's harvest—**don't take the corners of your fields,**
don't gather the gleanings,
and don't collect the fallen grapes.
Leave them for the poor and the stranger. I am יהוה your God...
Do not steal.
Do not cheat.
Do not lie to one another.
Do not lie in an oath using My name—and profane thereby the name of your God.
I am יהוה.
Do not defraud your neighbor. **Do not rob**.
Do not hold back the wages of a laborer until the next morning.
Do not insult the deaf.
Do not place an obstacle before the blind...
You should be **in awe of your God**.
I am יהוה....

a. According to this list, what kinds of things are holy?

_____

_____

b. Compare this list to your list of "holy things." How are they the same? How are they different?

_____

_____

CONCEPT: קְדֻשָּׁה

God is קָדוֹשׁ. קְדֻשָּׁה is the way God is, the special quality God has. When we feel close to God, when we have a sense of what God is like—we experience קְדֻשָּׁה.

People can also be holy. In Exodus 19:6, God tells the Jewish people, "YOU SHALL BE TO ME A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS AND A HOLY NATION." Likewise in Leviticus 19:2: "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I, יהוה, YOUR GOD, *I* HOLY."

While God *is* holy, people can *become* holy through their actions. קְדֻשָּׁה is something we experience in our relationship to God—and develop in ourselves through the things we do.

The *Kiddusha*

Goals:

Students will read the *Kiddusha*
Students will recall the roots of the Kiddusha in the Bible
Students will examine the 'holiness code' [*Leviticus* 19] to examine the concept of *Kiddusha*

Materials:

Workbooks
Pencils
Board marker & eraser

Lesson:

Welcome back / collect *tzedakah*

Review:
- Quick review of first 2 prayers of *Avot*.
- Complement students on their workbook exercises.

Introduction to *Kiddusha*
- Write name on board
- Ask what the root is, and what it means.
- Ask what other words/ prayers come from the same root.

First read through:
- Once as an entire group
- Once in smaller groupings

Page 42 'holiness' exercise- in *hevruta*
Discuss the commonality question

Page 43:
- Have someone read the page.
- Answer and discuss the 2 questions
  A] The text makes the ethical treatment of others the central factor in holiness
  B] Quick sharing

Page 44: have someone read the 'concept' – slowly.

Final read through of page 41.

Kidusha 2

Goals:

- Students will start to translate the *Kidusha*
- Students will examine the choreography of the prayer
- Students will explore the God experience found in the Isaiah text, which is the source of the first of the *Kidusha* responses
- Students will explore Ezekiel's vision
- Students will compare & contrast Ezekiel's experience with Isaiah's
- Students will identify thne concepts of 'immanence' and 'transcendence' as descriptions of experiences of God

Materials:

- Workbooks
- Pencils
- Board markers & Eraser

Lesson:

- Prayer read through – do as a whole class reading
- Translate page 45 – see how many words they already know. Do individually.
- Ask about the concept as "lord of hosts"
- Review the rules at bottom of page. Does (how?) the choreography influence the feeling of the prayer?
- Biblical source – Isaiah:
- Go over the tricky words- list on board
- Have students read through the text – take turns with new reader for each paragraph
- Discuss questions at bottom of page, adding persalization: have <u>you</u> ever felt close to God? Has God changed <u>your</u> life? Have you ever felt Holy? Have you ever known someone whom you felt was holy?
- Translate page 47:
  Have 2 different students read the concepts, slowly. Ask for this 'in their own words.' Explain that we will revisit these concepts again.
- Biblical source – Ezekiel:
- Read through the passage. Ask students what they think happened to Ezekiel. Do they think Ezekiel saw or got close to God?
- [Isaiah's experience was immanent. He gets close to God. Ezekiel's experience was transcendent. He experiences God's majesty, but in no way gets close. Both of these are authentic, valid Jewish experiences of God. Sometimes we feel that God is close. Sometimes we feel that God is distant. The *Kiddusha* weaves these together.]
- Quick run through of questions at the bottom of page 48.
- Comparison of Isaiah & Ezekiel:
- Chose 4 students (2 for Isaiah and 2 for Ezekiel) to act this out for next Tuesday. For homework, have the class read through the 2 readings again so that we can interview them on Tuesday.
- Also on Tuesday will be 1st *G'Vurot* reading time test.

Interview with Gabe

Clip #1

Gabe: My students have a lot of confidence that when I tell them I'll get back to them, they know I do. So I have credibility with them. And so a lot of times… There's very few times when I say, "We'll take care of it later." And they push it because they do know that if I say that I'm going to get back to it—and I think that's important, because that way they know their questions will be answered. And that way they'll give me a break when I'm trying to get through something.

I: You've talked about the flow from "*Avot*" to "*Gevurot.*" Can you talk a little bit about that and about what the goals or themes are?

G: When we talk about the *Amidah*, I introduce it as a basic shopping list, where we get to have a one-on-one with God. And the beginning lessons are, if you were going to go up to a king, or a parent, or somebody in authority, and you wanted something from them, what would be the process you would go through? And it was great what they came up with. By and large, they agreed they first would introduce themselves and say who they were, and then they would be very nice to them and butter them up, and then they'd say "Oh what a nice jacket you have on today" and "What cologne are you wearing?" And then they would start asking for what they want. And then we got into what would you do after that? Well, "Say thank you." And I say, "You know what? Coincidentally, that's what the *Amidah* is all about."

And then we went into the *Avot*, and talked about how we were introducing ourselves to God as, "You remember Abraham, Isaac, Sarah, Jacob, Leah, Rachel, and Rebekah? Well, you know what? You were their God, and we're related to them, so we want you to be our God, too." Then we move into the *Gevurot*, and we tell God how great God is and all the mighty things God does and God is our hero. And then we'll later move into the *kedushah* where we talk about holiness and how we can be like God and holy like God. And then we move into the middle *berakhot*, which is later, which is the petition *berakhot* where they ask for things. And it's neat how they flow together. And they know it.

For me it's very important not only that they learn to recite the prayers but that they mean something to them. Because otherwise it's not going to stay with them. One of the benefits I have is that I follow them through 6th and 7th and 10th grade, which also helps me revise how I teach it.

I: So thinking about the *Tefillah* curriculum for the year with this class, for 5th grade, what are some of the overarching themes or goals for what they are getting for the whole year?

G: The *Amidah* is actually the whole curriculum—other than holiday preparation—so that they can be able to recite the different prayers at the holidays. The major deviation from the *Amidah* is for Passover. I do a really intense Passover program, including giving

them an experiential lesson on when they get to their *seder* table when they say "we were slaves in Egypt." They know what it means because of my class, which is really cute, because the upperclassmen keep coming back and saying, "Did you do it yet? Did you do it yet?" It's like a rite of passage that they go through. Like for one solid day they know what it was like to go through to be slaves in Egypt.

But as far as the *Amidah*, I try to have them be able to obviously have the skills to recite the prayers, and I want them to know what it's about so they don't space off somewhere else. My hope is that a good number of them, when it's their turn, when they're in services, will actually do some introspection and praying and not just be looking for something else to do, like, "Oh, this is a time to go to the bathroom" or do something else. We do talk about the fact that the *Amidah* is a serious prayer, and when someone has started the *Amidah* you're not supposed to interrupt them, and we've talked about why that is. So those are the basic expectations for it.

Another thing that you haven't captured [on video] is another technique that I use is I challenge the kids to be able to read faster than me. I've been beaten every year, which is very gratifying. When we do the *Avot,* and I can read the *Avot* in 14 or 15 seconds, and I have some of the kids do it in 11 seconds—such that I can hear what they're doing; it's not a blur. And they see right through me. One year they said, "You're only doing this because you want us to practice," and I say, "Is it working?" and they go, "Yeah!" And if anyone can beat me, I buy candy for the whole class.

I: That's an incentive.

G: Yeah, it's an incentive, but it's not just that incentive. Because I really feel that kids want to do well. And they're here two hours twice a week instead of playing sports or doing something else. And so I have very high expectations as a teacher. I really try to stretch them–not so far that they'll feel frustrated and want to give up, but so they aspire to be better than they were that day, and the next day better than they were that day. So when they want to know their score on the speed test, I won't tell them. I'll tell them later how much they improve. I won't tell anyone what their times are. I'll say, "So-and-so beat me by five seconds." And they accept it. They complain but they accept it. And we go through the whole thing about how negative it would be if they started comparing with each other, and that it should be an individual thing. But it works really well. One mother told me kiddingly that her son was going to sleep with a stopwatch.

I: That's great. So in class, what are some of the other techniques or the ways that you "stretch" kids, going back to that comment?

G: I think in general it's a challenge. I challenge each student. And I also use as much positive praise as I can. Again for the fact that I find that if they feel that they're doing a good job then they'll rise to that. I'd rather have them rise to a level of my expectations than either for me to dumb it down or for them to get discouraged. So even the one who doesn't necessarily come prepared, I try to find some way to switch it around so that each class is a positive experience for each kid. So even if the student comes in less than

enthusiastic, then he or she goes home saying, "Yeah, I did it." Because then, they're gonna want to repeat that positive experience. So that's actually the secret behind my whole teaching technique: to have each kid have a positive experience when they come to school. And the rest really flows.

Clip #2

G: I try to start each class with a review of concepts that have been covered before so I can pull it out of them, not only to see if they retained it well, but also so it's coming in front of them more than once. I don't want to come to them and ask them for things every two or three months because I don't remember things in every two or three months.

I: In terms of discussions or ideas, do you ever challenge them on that level, or "stretch them"?

G: We have lots of discussions. I don't know if it stretches them, because these kids usually stretch me more than I stretch them. One of the neat things about teaching 5th grade and about teaching here is that a lot of the teachers are coming out of the same wavelength, so they're used to being challenged.

We had a student who graduated several years ago, and when kids graduate from here we have something called a *siyyum,* a concluding ceremony. And he got up and gave a speech and talked about how he'd learned to argue here. And while his secular teachers used to label him as "a pain," he always felt comfortable coming to our synagogue because he knew he would be encouraged to argue. And when he won debating tournaments in high school, they asked him how he'd done this, he said because of his religious school experience, he had been taught the value of being able to argue something and being able to back it up. That was very encouraging for me as one of his teachers to know that I helped him on his way.

When you ask about stretching them… We don't relate to answers as right or wrong. I might say, "That's a really good answer; I think it answers a different question," so technically it might be a wrong answer to the question but it might be a valid point. We try to validate the students, and by validating them often, they're more willing to take chances. Because even when they read Hebrew and they start to stall out, I say, "Go ahead. It's either going to be right or wrong. And you know, being wrong, it's not bad." Sometimes I tell them, "Will you be my substitute if I'm sick?" I have great students. So it's easy.

I: On a different topic, can you talk a little bit about how you became a Jewish educator?

G: I've had a number of different professional careers. The first one, I was a musician. Then I got married and decided I wanted to support my wife a little bit better than I could as a musician. So I went to work at a food manufacturing company as personnel director. I picked up a lot of skills there and I ended up 12 years later being vice president of operations and in charge of negotiating contracts and writing labor manuals and so forth

for the company. And then I decided that wasn't what I wanted to do anymore. I'm a child of the '60s, and what I felt at that time was that I needed to "relate to the dignity of each human being." When I decided to leave that, I didn't know what I wanted to do, but I knew what I didn't want to do. So I went to Northeastern University to get my bachelor's degree. Because when I was a musician I went to Berklee College of Music and I did not get a bachelors degree. One day while studying, my wife got a call from the then-director of education here to see if she could substitute. She wasn't home so I said, "What about me?" That was 15 years ago. The rest is history.

I hated Hebrew school as a child, although my teachers loved me because they had me sit right next to them. (*laughs*) I went to a local religious school, and I had to take the trolley. I would get off at Fenway Park in the springtime instead of going to religious school. It was not for me. I don't know if I was ADD or what, but it was not for me.

So when I had children I decided they would have a much different religious educational experience, and being a member of this synagogue I knew what it could be. Because when I walked into this synagogue one night for Friday night services, I knew that I was home. I had a lot of faith in this place.

So I took the job to substitute that day. The teacher had to leave for personal reasons. They asked me if I would take over the class, and I did. I saw that I had a natural rapport with the students and they did with me, and I was like one step ahead of them. That summer it was suggested that I read some books because they wanted me to come back. So I read some books. The new director came on and said, "You're not teaching Torah anymore; you're teaching Hebrew." So I said, "Well, I don't speak Hebrew." So she gave me some books, and I studied. And I continued to have a good rapport with the students, and I wanted it to be interesting for me, so I made it interesting for me, and it was interesting for them. And then I took on another course, and I took on another course. All the time I was working somewhere else, as well, doing this part time.

A couple of years ago I went to a rock concert with my son who is now 19. And on the way home we met some nice people, and they said to me, "What do you do for a living?" I had a video store at the time, but rather than saying I have a video store, I said, "I'm a Hebrew school teacher." And I realized at that point it was no longer a part-time endeavor while I had the video store. I was like, "Why did I say that? I didn't even know if these people were Jewish!" They were, as it turned out. But I said, "Hhmm, I better listen to myself." And I then made a complete switch over to doing this as a full-time profession.

I: So if someone said to you now, "Why did you do that?" Without giving the whole history, how would you answer that?

G: Judaism is an important part of my life. I love it. I would like the youth that I interact with to love it, as well as the families. I tell some of my students that you can be a Hebrew scholar and still be cool. I feel it's important to have a foundation in our heritage. It's worked for thousands of years, and the key is to give the students an in, a

connection… if I can get them to connect with it, to open their eyes. I know especially if we have them all the way to 12th grade, we have the opportunity to give them a firm religious basis. I think the tradition gives them a basis for how to see the world, our part in the world.

p #3

Related to this last comment, I was going to ask how what you do as a family educator dovetails with what you do in the classroom. Or what you've noticed by virtue of being in both roles.

G: I love to teach. Teaching adds a lot of hours to my day because my family education position is a full-time position. So teaching four afternoons and two nights makes it a long week. However, the connection I have with the children really pays off because I get to know who they are. And their parents show their appreciation because they may not have enjoyed their religious school experience, but "I don't know what you do, Gabe, but the kids come home and they love it." Therefore, it plays out very nicely at home, and parents come to my family ed programs with more openness than they don't want to come because they remember what their experience was. Plus, a lot of the homework we give out is homework that is geared towards being done with the families, and that is something that I go over with the teachers in the beginning of the year, so that engages the parents, as well, and there's the interaction, as well. And a lot of our adult education, of which I teach some of since I'm a member of the senior faculty as the family educator, we continually talk to parents in the family ed programs about the fact that they model for their children. If their children see religious school as something they, the children, have to do because their parents did it, it's not going to work. If they see it as part of an ongoing educational process through life ("and by the way, kids, you have a babysitter tonight because I'm going to a class"), or if they show up to an afternoon class for family ed, the fact that the parent takes off work early and shows up is really important for the kids. And the parents buy into it. So they really do dovetail nicely.