

## WORKSHOP IDEAS FOR JEWISH COMMUNITIES

prepared by Cherie Karo Schwartz © 1997

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Welcome to a whole world of story! I have over 300 stories to draw from, and will be happy to work with you to create programs for your specific interests and needs. Here are some of my favorites from the past 25 years. And, feel free to suggest others; the possibilities are endless! I will enjoy sharing stories with your community. L'Shalom, *Cherie*

### SOME FAVORITE PROGRAM TOPICS

- tzedakah truths (levels and ways of giving)
- study of, creation of, and recreation of midrashim (classic tales and modern)
- holiday happenings (with storytelling and improvisation)
- recreating the ruach (creation of a new Jewish Holiday with story and celebration)
- students as storytellers (students studying, learning and telling stories)
- ethics in action (improvisations and discussions)
- Jewish family folklore (retrieving and telling family stories, and sharing family treasures)
- Jewish storytelling dor v'dor (intergenerational storytelling)
- life cycles (stories and group improvisations about life cycle events)
- Hassidic Tales (stories of wonder and faith and joy)
- stories to play (creating improvisations from folklore and books)
- worldwide Jewish folklore (Jewish stories from around the world)
- shtetl stories (stories to lay about life in small Eastern European towns)
- legacy of lore project (students creating their own versions of folklore for telling)

### STORYING OUR STUDIES: A WELLSPRING OF STORIES

There are descriptions of several storytelling projects which I have developed for use with organizations, schools, and congregations

#### LEGACY OF LORE STORYTELLING PROJECT

participants learn about Jewish folklore. Then, they each find a Jewish story (text, midrash, folktale), learn to tell story, share story, and write their own version which is then bound and made part of school or congregation library

#### INTERGENERATIONAL TELLING

participants works with group of senior adults to share, create, and improvise stories of their lives and memories. The participants can be listeners, recorders, actors, or writers of stories with and about their elders

#### SUKKAT SHALOM

the group creates an actual sukkah, a booth with 3 sides and temporary roof (with openings). Decorations are representations of their connections with the world: Shabbat, Tikkum Olam (repair the world), Gemilut Chasadim (deeds of loving kindness); then they add their own midrashim (stories)

#### STORY AND CREATION OF TALLIT

the group answers questions: who wore the first tallit? What did it look like? Where did it come from? Then they share their midrashim (stories) with the group. Through questions and imaging, participants develop story connection to colors, shapes and symbols for the creation of tallit and kippah

#### MODERN MIDRASHIM

the group discusses the meaning and intent of midrashim. Then, smaller groups ponder and create new midrashim based on Torah: either questions from the sedra, or

other questions: What happened to Miriam's tambourine? The rod of Moses? Miriam's Well? Ephod?

#### VERY JEWISH QUESTIONS

the group gets into small groups (5-7), discussion of classic midrashim leads to questions: Why are blue and white 'Jewish colors'? Why does a Magen David have 6 points? Why is a challah braided? Each group chooses a question and develops story explanation for presentation

#### VERBAL AND VISUAL MIDRASHIM

class studies midrash (explanatory stories) in classic context, modern midrash, and begin to create their own midrashim. Each person develops a personal midrash (from experience, connections, life stories, dreams). Then, participants learn about and create visual midrashim from their verbal story (papercutting, torn paper, collage, micrography, water color)

#### THE MAZE

2 people volunteer, 1 to lead and other to follow and they are sent outside the room. Other students from their bodies into a human obstacle course (like miniature golf). Then, leader blindfolds follower and verbally leads follower into room and through maze without follower touching any part of obstacles. Leader only uses voice to lead. Discussion follows about application of maze to Jewish history (Moses, Warsaw, ghetto, expulsion from Spain)

#### RECREATING THE RUACH

group discusses elements of Jewish holiday (prayer, song, food, story, ritual, symbol). Then, they discover events which are not yet holidays, and they decide on one (i.e. Yom ha-Yeladim, celebrating children). In small groups, participants develop each aspect of the new holiday, share and refine with whole group, and then celebrate their new holiday. It is also effective for new ways with known holidays

#### RUBE GOLDBERG INVENTIONS

the group discusses creative Jewish minds, some Jewish thinking heroes, and what inventions could now help the Jews. Then, in small groups each 'invents' a machine with bodies: movement, sound and interdependent parts. Groups present machines to whole group. They can be lighthearted (matzahball maker) or serious (machine to improve air quality).

#### COMING OF AGE (B'nei Mitzvot)

mazes, tallitot, journeys, keep/leave behind, Sukkat Shalom, tzedakah

### **SOME TOPICS FOR ADULTS, TEACHERS, AND STUDENTS**

- teaching storytelling technique
- use of storytelling techniques with families
- gathering family folklore
- comparative folklore and comparative Jewish folklore
- Jewish folklore themes and types
- developing storytelling and speaking skills
- family education programs
- senior citizens programs of stories and family folklore
- stories and foods
- stories and family treasures