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לַבְּרִיאוּת

To Our Health and Wellness



A Kindergarten through Grade Six Curriculum

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INTRODUCTION TO THE LA-BRI'UT CURRICULUM

“לַבְּרִיאוּת **La-bri'ut: To Our Health and Wellness**” is timely and relevant new curriculum designed for children in kindergarten through sixth grade. Over the course of a year, learners gain a variety of tools that build resiliency and supportive strategies for better managing the challenges that life can throw their way, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

The learning approach is a hybrid. Synchronous learning occurs in a weekly cohort-based *mifgash* (“gathering”). Asynchronous learning occurs at home, where children unleash their creativity with a fair amount of independence from the adults in their lives. Lower elementary age children enjoy curated boxes of hands-on activities, while upper elementary learners engage in interesting weekly challenges. Learning is anchored in Jewish texts and tales of our past, offering rich understandings of Jewish values that guide personal and communal health and wellness.

CONTENT:

The **curriculum is built on Jewish values** that stand on their own, but also complement five caregiving principles that support recovery and resiliency for communities that experience trauma,¹ such as the world-wide COVID-19 pandemic. Five modules each align with one Jewish value and one caregiving principle:

- *Sukkat Shalom* (shelter of peace) - A sense of safety
- *Ometz Lev* (inner strength) - A sense of calm
- *G'vurah* (courage) - Self- and communal-efficacy
- *K'hillah* (community) - Social connectedness
- *Hesed* (loving kindness) - Hope attained by reaching out to assist others

The year's learning is also framed by a text attributed to the sage, Hillel, and recorded in *Pirke Avot*. It serves as the curriculum's **Enduring Understanding** (big idea)

If I am not for myself, who will be for me?

If I am only for myself, what am I?

If not now, when?

Each module helps learners gain an understanding of these values and principles for themselves, their families and their communities through stories, activities and exploration, all while strengthening their wellness and resilience.

A general overview, originally developed for parents, offers an orientation that teachers and *madrichim* (teen assistants) will find helpful – <https://youtu.be/Xf6ZHQLeuS8>

For those not yet comfortable with Hebrew, this video explains and pronounces the names of the five modules and some other key terms: <https://youtu.be/Juu74UC9CdA>

¹ <https://guilfordjournals.com/doi/10.1521/psyc.2007.70.4.283>

FORMAT:

As conceptualized, the **curriculum's structure includes a number of elements**, all listed below. They may be adapted by educational programs based on on-the-ground realities.

- **K'vutzah (group)** is a cohort of learners; it is the foundational grouping for synchronous learning.
 - Ideally, each *k'vutzah* has a maximum of 8-10 children, a manageable size for productive virtual learning. Each educational program may format their *k'vutzot* (plural of *k'vutzah*) as desired,² whether organizing by: children from the same family matched with other families; children from the same grade; clusters of grades (e.g., grades 4-6); or some other arrangement.
 - Each *k'vutzah* is facilitated by at least one teacher. Educational programs that utilize teen assistants, will find that they can be engaged and involved in the facilitation of *mifgashim* (plural of *mifgash* – see below). Ideas for the use of teens are embedded in the curriculum guide.
 - Additional support may be offered by teachers in online check-ins with learners during the week to offer assistance or feedback on their at-home activities or challenges.
 - Your *k'vutzah* may meet in person on occasion, depending on the changing health regulations of your area.
- **Mifgash (gathering)** is a *k'vutzah's* weekly synchronous session of approximately 30 minutes held over video chat (e.g., Zoom).
 - This might be the only online gathering from an educational program, or it might be in addition to other curricular elements such as Hebrew and *t'fillah*.
 - Lesson plans for each *mifgash* are provided in the curriculum and may be adapted as needed to support learner needs and the community's culture.
- **Lower Elementary Activities** are do-it-yourself explorations completed at home with minimal help from an older sibling or adult.
 - These activity boxes/bags/kits are delivered (whether by drop-off, pickup or mail) to families upon the beginning of each module (so five activities at a time).
 - Activity Box Supply lists for each module are provided on the "Curriculum Content" page on the *La-bri'ut* website: <https://jec-tohealthcurric.weebly.com/curriculum-content.html>. The lists may be adapted based on the individual needs of each family or community.

² Questions to consider when setting up *k'vutzot* include:

- How can combining older learners with younger ones enhance the level of conversation and learning that takes place in a *mifgash*?
- Could families with multiple siblings be placed into the same *k'vutzah* along with other families with similar age spread? Will siblings be okay working together or will it cause tension that may be distracting to other learners?
- How can a sense of community be strengthened among *k'vutzah* members?
- Do families with multiple children have enough devices for learners to participate in separate, simultaneous *mifgashim* (if that's how they are scheduled)? If so, grade levels or clusters might be an acceptable format. If not, then *k'vutzot* based on family groupings might be the answer.

Educational programs may wish to send extra surprises in each box – swag, a food item that complements an upcoming holiday, a personalized note from the teacher and/or teen assistant, a QR code that leads to a special song or video, etc.

- Programs may choose to place each week's items in a separate bag, container or envelope within the delivery box OR to place all of the module's items in the larger box (or bag), leading to some suspense ("hmm, why do we have some dish soap in the box this month?").
 - The modules posted under the "For Learners" tab include short videos with Box Instructions for each of the weeks, offering children support and guidance to complete their activities without relying too much on the assistance of overwhelmed adults in their home. For example, five Box Instruction videos are found on the Sukkat Shalom "For Learners" webpage: <https://jec-tohealthcurric.weebly.com/sukkat-shalom---l.html>
 - Teachers should view Box Instruction videos in advance of *mifgashim* to determine how to explain the task to the children.
 - It would be helpful for teachers to be provided with a set of Box supplies so that during the "Launching At-Home Learning" segment they can show children what they will be doing in the coming week. Or, one of the *madrichim* with good explanation skills could be tasked with this.
 - Parents should be encouraged to watch each Box Instructions video in advance to see how that week's project is explained and what they may need to provide their child in the way of set-up, especially if there are markers, glue, paint or other potentially messy items.
 - Some of the projects require multiple steps. The first couple of times children work with at-home activities, parents may need to show their children how to pause the video, complete a step and then resume.
- **Upper Elementary Challenges** are creative, project-based opportunities for older children to apply their learning to real-life contexts.
 - Each module contains five weekly challenges that build one upon the other.
 - Each challenge is introduced via a Challenge Video and Challenge Card - these provide instructions, a review/reminder of content, and helpful hints. They are found under the "For Learners" tab, on the webpage for each module. For example, check here: <https://jec-tohealthcurric.weebly.com/sukkat-shalom---l.html>
 - These challenges require minimal supplies (mostly just pen/markers & paper) and only a bit of help from an adult at home, depending on a learner's needs.
 - Children without home printers may use regular paper and refer to the templates for what to write or draw. OR, educational programs may wish to print and send the upper elementary children either all of a module's Challenge Cards, or just the pages that are in template form. Note that two cards may be printed on a page, saving some paper and ink!

- **Family Schmooze** (Yiddish: chat or conversation) is an opportunity for families to continue the learning at home, mostly through informal discussions at dinner, in the car, or when an opportunity presents itself.

THE ROLE OF PARENTS:

While parents are always seen as partners with the educational programs their children attend, this curriculum was developed cognizant of the current stresses and obligations many parents are juggling; time and energy are often in short supply. Thus, the ***at-home learning activities were designed so that children can handle them relatively independently***, with minimal technological or instructional help from adults. That said, younger children may need help with directions or supplies, such as an adult reinforcing that permanent markers (used for Shrinky Dinks) can leave hard-to-get-off marks on furniture if the child is not careful, or lending a hand when a logo needs to be ironed onto a piece of fabric.

In *La-bri'ut*, ***adults are not be put in the uncomfortable role of being provider of content, answer-er of hard questions, or taskmaster to complete work***. Parents will mainly be encouraging learners' full participation in their *mifgash* and completion of activities/challenges throughout each week. In addition, having a place to display projects (e.g., Flipgrid) and seeing that other children are creating interesting videos, may spur reluctant learners to engage in at-home activities. This video should put parents at ease: <https://youtu.be/Xf6ZHQLeuS8>.

THE FREE-TO-DOWNLOAD CURRICULUM INCLUDES:

- **For Learners & Parents** <https://jec-tohealthcurric.weebly.com/for-learners.html>
 - Family Schmooze Cards
 - Lower Elementary Activity Box Instruction Videos
 - Upper Elementary Challenge Videos & Challenge Cards
- **For Teachers** <https://jec-tohealthcurric.weebly.com/for-learners.html>
 - An overview and grid that provides background for each value and module.
 - A teaching/learning plan for each *mifgash*, including visuals posted onto RESOURCE SHEETS for easy screen-sharing.
 - Professional Development resources such as orientation videos from the *La'bri'ut* team and technological tutorials.
- **For Directors** <https://jec-tohealthcurric.weebly.com/curriculum-content.html>
 - Full curriculum content (not split by *mifgash*).
 - Supply lists for putting together the Lower Elementary Activity Boxes.
 - Full sets of Upper Elementary Challenge Cards.
 - Full sets of Family Schmooze cards.
 - Resources for facilitating professional development,
 - including upcoming webinars<https://jec-tohealthcurric.weebly.com/profl-dev-resources.html>

- videos that offer an orientation to different elements of this curriculum
<https://jec-tohealthcurric.weebly.com/videos-for-pd.html>
- technological tutorials
<https://jec-tohealthcurric.weebly.com/tech-tutorials.html>

GETTING STARTED:

All the **curriculum is available for free and immediate download** from: <https://jec-tohealthcurric.weebly.com/for-teachers.html>. Note that on the “For Teachers” webpage, material is divided by *mifgash*, while complete modules may be downloaded in one complete document on the “Curriculum Content” page under the “Prof’l Dev Resources” tab <https://jec-tohealthcurric.weebly.com/curriculum-content.html>

As noted, there is an **introductory mifgash** session that orients learners to this curriculum and its unique format. It also offers assistance in setting up behavioral parameters on Zoom. It is at the top of this page: <https://jec-tohealthcurric.weebly.com/for-teachers.html>

There are **two major technologies** in use throughout the year: an online meeting platform (like Zoom) and an easy-to-use online student-share platform called Flipgrid. The latter was chosen due to its ease (no account needed), specific capabilities and simplicity <https://tinyurl.com/Flipgrid-teacher-overview> and <https://tinyurl.com/Flipgrid-student-overview>. However, educational programs may choose whatever platform that their students may be more familiar with from public/private school (e.g., Padlet).

CONSIDERATIONS:

This curriculum was planned as five modules, each with five sessions, plus a week of introduction and conclusion on either end. This may be adapted by your community as needed due to other scheduling or cultural (“but this is how we do it!”) parameters.

It is **strongly suggested that the year start with the introductory module** (top of this page: <https://jec-tohealthcurric.weebly.com/for-teachers.html>), then formally begin with *Sukkat Shalom* (<https://jec-tohealthcurric.weebly.com/sukkat-shalom.html>) and conclude with *Hesed* (<https://jec-tohealthcurric.weebly.com/hesed.html>). These two book-end the learning in a very intentional way.

As for the **middle three modules**, they *could* be sequenced however desired. However, since they follow the caregiving progression that Stevan Hobfoll outlined,³ there is some logic to the order. Some modules intentionally contain mentions of holidays, and if taught in the proposed order, these would be taught at the approximate time they appear the calendar. For example, if *G’vurah* is scheduled as the third module, its mention of *Hanukkah* could fall just before or just after the holiday.

³ <https://quifordjournals.com/doi/10.1521/psyc.2007.70.4.283>

PJ Library books were included in some of the Family Schmooze or follow-up suggestions, as it is assumed that a number of families already receive these. PJ Library is a free service providing Jewish-themed children's books to families all around the world! Encourage families to visit this website if their children are not yet receiving PJ Library books <https://tinyurl.com/yxqb8szl> or, provide your community's direct registration link.

As learners move through the year, be sure to **take pictures and/or screenshots of their mifgash sessions, Flipgrid shares**, etc. These could be used in an end-of-year slideshow as a meaningful culmination of the year's activities, learning, and discussions. Depending on progress against COVID-19 in the spring of 2021, share the slideshow at an in-person or virtual concluding celebration.

If a program has **teen madrichim/madrichot** (*teaching assistants*) there are opportunities for them to become active facilitators and support the teacher. They could be engaged in various roles such as storytelling, handling the visuals and videos while the teacher is focusing on the children, the greeting/check-in segment of *mifgash*, taking notes on student responses, etc. The goal is for *madrichim/madrichot* to be engaged, not just another face on the Zoom screen.

This curriculum is being launched nationwide, untested and unpiloted. It is a result of a very surprising and uncertain time in our lives. It was conceptualized and written, with all supplementary materials completed, in 11 intense weeks during the summer of 2020. Therefore, it was not formally piloted prior to launch. There will be bumps along the way, typos discovered and rabbit holes teachers may find themselves crawling out of. But **consider it a Great Adventure** with many colleagues along for the journey.⁴ The Facebook group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/jectohealthcurric>) is the best place to offer advice and get assistance. Something that works in one community may not work in another, and there is plenty of space to adapt learning for each *k'vutzah*.

Remember, too, that **change is hard**. This curriculum is built around new content, a new learning structure and approach. It puts educators, children and parents in new and sometimes challenging roles. Chances are that towards the end of the first module or early into the second, there will be pushback. This is when **listening, problem-solving and conversations with colleagues is very important ... as well as a spirit of adventure**.

Directors will have the opportunity to participate in online conversations with the JEC Curriculum Department throughout the school year. Webinars will be set up prior to the anticipated start of most of the modules. But local is powerful – find other colleagues to troubleshoot with, to celebrate success and reflect on the learning approach and curriculum. A community of practice may be the best strategy for support!

May we go from strength to strength, in health and wellness - la'bri-ut!

⁴ As of this writing in mid-August 2020, more than 180 educational programs indicated that they would be using *La-bri'ut*, representing at least 10,000 children.

GREETINGS & CHECK-IN ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

The first part of La-bri'ut's mifgash (gathering) is a 3 minutes or less greeting/check-in that acknowledges every learner by name. The choice of activity is up to the facilitator, depending on the group make-up and personalities; and yes, this is a great job for teen assistants/madrichim. Here are some potential activity ideas for you:

- **MOOD METER** – Participants use their arm like a meter from low to high, or their fist to rate from 0-5, or their thumb up-middle-down, to quickly show how they're feeling today. Call on children by name to find out about their rating.
- **PASS THE GREETING** – Call on someone and ask how they are feeling today. They respond and then they call on another person in the group. (For example: Person 1: "Hi, Sarah. How are you today?" Person 2: "Hi Morah Goldman, I'm fine, thank you. Hello, how are you, Jacob?"...)
- **FINDING EACH OTHER** – Call out names of the participants and all other participants need to reach their arms to point toward them on their screen (left, right, up, down). The called-on participant can do a little dance or wave and say "*shalom*." [This activity moves along faster if a teacher or *madrich/madrichah* calls on each child.] Another version of "finding each other" is to have everyone reach out to the people on either side of them and give a hug. Because the screens display learners in different orders, the facilitator can say, "Anna, I see you have found Sam. Anna – who has Sam found?" Anna would say, "Sam has found Megan. Sam – who has Megan found?"
- **MIRIAM'S MOVES** – Just like Miriam who danced after crossing the Sea of Reeds, participants can show off their dance moves by introducing themselves along with a simple dance move or hand motion. After each participant shares their name and move, all other participants repeat the name and the dance move together. Go around until all participants have gone. **EXTRA OPTION:** Then, see if the group can remember everyone's moves by calling out each participant's name and doing their move again!
- **SUPER SPEED SCAVENGER HUNT** – Challenge participants to very quickly find something in their room that fits into the category you name. As they return, ask participants by name to hold their item up to the camera. Announce their return ("I see Sarah and Jonah are back... now Beth and Josh are too! Here comes Abe...."). Participants could be called upon to name a category as well. (For example "you have 10 seconds to find something that is _____"; could include: is blue, makes you happy, is something Jewish, has an animal on it, etc.)
- **GIVING A GIFT** - Imagine you have been transported back almost 4,000 years to a huge, hot desert. You look up and realize that up ahead are Abraham and Sarah, along with lots of sheep and camels. You remember that they love visitors and treat them quite well so you walk in their direction. Just before you get to their tent, you realize that you should give THEM a gift. You

reach into your backpack which has some amazing things in it from your life, today. Pull out the item (pantomime), introduce yourself and say what you brought. Example: "Shalom, I'm Josh and I've brought you a gift of this frozen cake." [The activity could be repeated with anyone else – for instance Hillel who might be given a set of winter gloves for the next time he falls asleep on the roof (this is one of the stories the children will learn about.)]

- **I SPY** – Make sure everyone is on the Gallery View option so you can see all participants side by side. Then, silently choose the first item you want to 'spy'. Say: "I spy something ____" If someone has a blue hat in the background or a huge, colorful tapestry, you can try and get others to guess at it. Participants should guess what item you're spying ("Is it Sarah's pillow? Is it Jonah's chair?) Whoever has the previous item in their screen goes next, instead of the winning guesser. Ask each participant to spy something in someone else's screen who has not already been called upon.
- **RAISE YOUR HAND** - In this spin off of the Take-A-Stand activity, the teacher has a list of statements based on people's experiences, values, or opinions that can either apply to students or not (e.g., whether you're a swimmer, soccer player, piano player, etc.). If the statement applies to the student, he or she will utilize the Raise Hand button of Zoom to raise their hands, or do some particular motion. This is a great activity to not only break the ice, but to get your class to know a little bit more about one another. Plus, it doesn't hurt that it highlights the Raise Hand feature of Zoom if your class recently started to use the application. Participants can take turns naming a category as well. (Example: "I am Josh and I am a swimmer." All other swimmers raise hands or do a motion, then someone else names "I am Shira and I have a dog." Etc.)
 - OPTION – Children can literally raise their hands instead of using the Zoom-function.
 - OPTION – Children could turn off their video when the teacher asks the question and then turn it on if the answer is yes.
 - OPTION – Children can be asked to pick up something in the room they are in and hold it up if the answer is yes.
- **אֲנַחְנוּ "ANAHNU"/WE ARE** - The facilitator asks for suggestions of animals, objects, professions/jobs, emotions or anything of which children could say "we are" or "anahnu!" Yep, bonus for Jewishly-themed ideas. The facilitator makes a list, keeping tabs of who said what. Then the teacher offers one idea at a time, including the child's name (Julia says, "Anahnu chairs." OR, Ben says, "Anahnu Torah scrolls"). Everyone then supports the suggestion and follows the leader by acting like a chair or a Torah scroll. After about 5 seconds the facilitator says, "Freeze" (or, for those who have learned Hebrew Through Movement, say לַעֲצוֹר la'atzor, stop!). Everyone stops moving and then a new word is said.
- **תּוֹדָה רַבָּה "Todah Rabbah"/ Thank you very much** - In this activity, Person 1 says "I got you [NAME of Person 2] a gift – it's a _____" and mimes handing a gift to Person 2, who mimes receiving the gift and first says "Todah Rabbah" and then names what the gift is, "Thank you for the incredibly heavy Torah!" or "Thank you for the decoration I can hang in my sukkah." Improv

is about listening and giving “gifts” to our scene partners, no matter how silly it is. Person 2 then passes their gift and a new gift to Person 3 (for example, Person 2 says “Sam, I got you a very heavy Torah and a very greasy *latke*”), who then passes to Person 4, etc. As it goes along, each person has to “juggle” more and more gifts.

- The שמע *Sh'ma* Game - This activity is demonstrated by two leaders and then played by the participants. The goal of this activity is to create a story while following one important rule: The last word of the previous sentence is the first word of your next sentence. This activity encourages being an active listener and not just rushing to come up with what one wants to say next. Call upon participants by name for who goes next, as they will not appear in the same order on everyone's Zoom screen. (For example, a conversation might look like this. Person 1/Teacher: I really want to get a box. Teacher: Jonah you're up. Person 2/Jonah: Boxes are great for carrying *allah*. Teacher: Josh you're up. Person 3/Josh: *Hallah* that I ate last week was stuffed with chocolate ice cream.)
- CHANGE 3 THINGS – Everyone takes 10 seconds to study the video image of one participant, who stays very still. Then, that participant turns off their video for 10 seconds and changes 3 things about their look (glasses on/off, hair behind or in front of ears, move something in the background, etc.). They turn their video back on and other participants need to guess what changed.

FOR OLDER CHILDREN (e.g., those who can easily read, write and manipulate Zoom functions)

- GUESS WHO? - Start by getting students to think of a unique and interesting fun fact about themselves. Then, using the Chat option on Zoom, have each person send the fun fact (or favorite song, hobby, etc.) only to the facilitator (and not to Everyone). Alternatively, the facilitator can have participants email the fun fact to the them. Once the fun facts have been collected, the facilitator will read each of the fun facts to the group, and as each fun fact is read, the larger team will try to decide who the fun fact belongs to (this might be a good time to use the Polling or Annotations options on Zoom). The objective for the team will be to try to connect the fact to the right participants as many times as possible. [A round of this game could be played with a Jewish theme.]
- CAPTION CONTEST - The facilitator chooses a participant to freeze in a pose. Once frozen, all other participants write in the chat box a Caption for the frozen person (it could describe the situation she might be in or what she might be thinking at that moment). The facilitator reads all the captions outloud, then unmutes the frozen participant, tells her to unfreeze and choose her favorite caption. Participants may also use Virtual Backgrounds to add context to their frozen pose.

- EMOJI EMOTIONS – Ask each participant to choose an emoji to put into the chat feature which demonstrates how they're feeling today. They could also take turns making an "emoji face" for real.
- OTHER HELPFUL TOOLS FOR READERS AND WRITERS:
 - ANSWERGARDEN- <https://answergarden.ch/> This is a great tool in which you pose a question with the link in the chat and participants give their responses which become a word cloud. It can help the facilitator get a read on the group, as words that are repeated grow bigger.
 - MENTIMETER – www.mentimeter.com is a site where you can pose a question and collect answers from participants, which show up as a stream on the webpage. You should screen share the Mentimeter site which displays the group code, and shows answers as they're entered in real time.
 - POLL EVERYWHERE - <https://www.polleverywhere.com/> allows you to create interactive polls which can be responded to via text. The free version allows up to 25 responses per activity.