Educational Vision for Israel

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The following program is likely to be suitable for an older or more serious group and may be best used in a residential setting. It may also be broken into two shorter programs for use with a more typical NFTY TYG.

Rationale

As Reform Jews, we have a particular vision for the State of Israel - a way we understand its potential and its significance and therefore a path we would like it to take. All Jews do not necessarily share this vision, including not all Israelis (which is fine). This vision – an answer to the question, "What do we want Israel to be like?" is not self-evident to our participants. It needs to be articulated by us and understood and reflected on by them. We need to make explicit and give prominence to the specific content of our movement's vision. At the same time that we share with them that vision as articulated by the Movement's leadership (in this case, the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR)), we use that learning to engage our participants in a conversation about Israel, one that has to do with vision and values, not just yesterday's headlines. As school-age education is both well known to NFTYites and a key part of the nation-building process, this program adopts schooling as a prism through which to explore the possible content of, and tensions within, that vision.

After the participants brainstorm about the ideal Israel, the program moves on to a small-group exercise about Israel's school system. This is designed to help the participants explore and clarify their vision and to see how that might be achieved through education. They then explore the CCAR Miami Platform in a context that invites reflection on their work till that point. The Platform is framed as worth knowing and understanding because it contains critical ideas that can inform and enrich our thinking about Israel. After this simulation, the next stage of learning is a 'meeting' with actual Israel through the investigation of real Israeli educational Institutes of all kinds (through use of Israeli Web sites in English). This peek behind the curtain of the 'CNN' media image of Israel will show participants that the simulation about the Israeli education system points towards an actual, thriving, complex society that has high schools, Universities, special programs (including Institutes for Peace, Film Schools and more) that are Israelis' answers to the question "What do we want Israel to be like?"

Goals

1. To explore different ideas about how we would like to see Israeli society
2. To understand that the Reform Movement has such a vision and to become acquainted with that vision
3. To learn about and connect with a small aspect of Israel's education system as Israelis' answer to the question, "What kind of Israeli society do we want?"

Materials

Depending on the number of participants, enough of the following:
1. Flip chart or whiteboard + markers for brainstorming with the group
2. Poster Boards and markers, pens and paper (one set for each of the break-out groups)
3. Handouts included in this program:
   a. Imaginary Exercise

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Extracts from CCAR 'Miami Platform'
List of Israeli education Websites (this can be distributed electronically as well).

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Access to computer workstations to access to the Web during the activity (is there a library or office that you can access with prior coordination?), OR other ways to access the information available over the Web (these are detailed in the body of the program)

Timetable:

#	Time	Activity
1.	0:00-0:15	Brainstorm about "What kind of Israel do we want?"
2.	0:15-0:35	Small groups Part #1 – Emergency meeting to advise Israel's Education Ministry
3.	0:35-0:55	Small groups Part #2 – "Visit" by CCAR and continued work
4.	0:55-1:15	Discussing the work of the small groups
5.	1:15-1:20	Introduction to Web-work
6.	1:20-1:40	Learning about actual Israeli education settings - searching Websites
7.	1:40-1:50	Conclusion

Detailed Procedure:

0:00-0:15   Brainstorm about "What kind of Israel do we want?"
Introduce the program by referring to how much we hear about Israel in the press – often in relation to conflict and violence. Yet day-to-day, Israelis get on with the business of building their country and making it the kind of place they want to live in as best they can *(read an extract from the interview with Sharon Morgenstein in this Esource, if you wish)*.

Tell them that not only do Israelis think about and work towards making Israel the kind of country they want to live in, Jews in North America do too. Ask participants "What kind of country would you like Israel to be?" List their responses on a poster board. The list can include some aspects of Israel as it is, others as they wish it would be. To include only one implies that it is either totally perfect or totally imperfect. You may even wish to divide your flip chart into two sections and make the distinction explicit.

0:15-0:35   Small groups Part 1 – Emergency meeting with Israel's Education Ministry
Explain to the group in a half-serious, half-'winking' style that they have been asked by the Israeli Ministry of Education to act as an advisory committee. The country is soon to review and evaluation the education system to see whether and how it is leading them in the direction they wish to go. Israel believes that the education system of today has a decisive impact on what kind of country we live in tomorrow – the subjects we teach, the experiences children have all an impact on the way they see the world, on how they act as children today and adults tomorrow.

Split the participants into small groups (5-6 people) that can effectively do the task that follows. One person should be nominated as the group facilitator and another as the person who will report back to the whole group at the end of the exercise. According to how old the group is and how practiced they are at this kind of exercise, you can nominate these people or ask the group to do so as a first task. Define the roles as much as required (in writing if necessary).

Once in the small groups, give each group the "**Emergency meeting to advise Israel's Education Ministry"** hand out and ask them to start work. Tell them that they will have about 20 minutes to complete the exercise.

0:35-0:55   Small groups Part #2 – "Visit" by CCAR and continued work

After the first 15 minutes (above), even if they have not finished, hand each group the next sheet **"A CCAR delegation visits your group."** Give them another 15 minutes to read and discuss this, to consider changes and prepare their amended report.

0:55-1:15   Discussing the work of the small groups
Back in the large group (if you have over 30 people, do this part in sub-groups), ask groups to:
- ❑ Describe their final curriculum and the principles behind it
- ❑ Report what they changed after the CCAR and why they made these changes
- ❑ Ask them to vote on the best proposal (individually, not as groups). You can not vote for your own group's proposal.

When the work groups have finished reporting, ask the large group:
- ❑ What did people think of the extracts they read from the CCAR Miami Platform? With what did they strongly agree or disagree? Have the participants take out their sheets with the Platform on it so that they can recall what they saw and read parts out.
- ❑ What does it mean for the Reform Movement – for them as Reform Jews – to have opinions about what Israel should look like when Israel is a sovereign, independent country thousands of miles away? What point is there to such a discussion, to forming opinions about these things? Do we have a right to support those forces in Israel that see things the way we do?

Answers to these questions are not simple. You can let them flounder a little if they can't respond. Conclude by suggesting that we are all part of the same extended family and that families do have discussions and try to influence each other – not force each other – by taking an interest, supporting, questioning, encouraging, helping and where necessary challenging each other out of their concern and love for other family members. That is the relationship we have with Israel – one of peoplehood, of family.

1:15-1:20   Introduction to Web-work
To see what Israelis are doing to help the next generation prepare for the kind of country they dream of, you are going to offer the participants an opportunity to look through a window into the real Israel of 2003. That window is the Internet. If until now you have been talking 'in principle', now you will be introduced to the real thing.

The actual task is to get an impression of several sites then settle on one or two and learn a little about them. They are not gong to master anything in this small amount of time, just as no Israeli student would master the Schools, Universities and specialty Colleges of New Jersey in 20 minutes. They should, however, be able to make some comments about what they learnt and the very fact of what it was like to go on-line to gain this insight to Israel.

1:20-1:40   Learning about actual Israeli education settings - searching Websites
Make the attached list easily available to the groups on-line (so that they can use the hyperlinks). Ask them to spend some time surfing and reading, gaining an impression of some institutions they select. Of particular interest may be the schools (see "***ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS***").

Note: There are several ways to access the Internet with your group (you need a computer for each 3-5 participants): The best by far - use computers on-site during the activity to access to the Web. If you don't have an obvious place for this, like a youth room or library, ask ahead of time if there are office computers that someone authorized can be present and let you use. If even this is difficult, see the attached guide for other ways to do the work on the Web.

1:40-1:50   Conclusion

Note that it is not easy to jump from a self-contained simulation to the real world scope of a whole country. While the simulation invites very clear positions and statements, looking through the web in this way gives us a very, very partial glimpse of the real Israel.

Ask for a few comments (not discussion – this is a closing exercise) about what this contributed to their understanding of Israel. What were some impressions gained while surfing? What surprised them, impressed them, made them wonder, left them asking questions?

While they cannot say anything about "Israeli Education," for they have only seen a tiny sampling, they certainly can comment about what they saw.

In closing, refer back to the original brainstorm, to their vision for Israel. Just like the participants have hopes for Israel, so do hundreds of thousands of Israeli educators, teachers, Professors and youth group leaders. They like your NFTY group are working towards a better Jewish future. In the rush of news headlines about the political and security situation in Israel, it is easy to forget that Israelis live day-to-day lives as students and teachers, trying to work towards making Israel a better society.

Optional part of the process

Invite the participants to publicize the ideas, issues and information this program raised in the community your TYG belongs to. This might be through:
- ❑ Creating a report with quotes, pictures and web links that can be published on the community's Website
- ❑ Creating a display in entrance hall to the synagogue and or other central spaces
- ❑ Giving a *D'var Torah* during *Tfillot*
- ❑ Writing in the community newsletter

Emergency meeting of Education Ministry

We at the Israeli Ministry of Education thank you for taking the time to advise us as we review and upgrade the curriculum in Israeli High Schools. Since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 – and the truth is even before that in the Jewish settlements called the *Yishuv* - we have taken great care in designing our educational program so that it helps our young people become a productive part of society. As we had to design a completely new educational system, we were free to make any decisions we wanted – and at times we have had great emphasis on different things according to what we thought young people need to know and according to the spirit of the times.

We think that your 'outsider' perspective could be a valuable source of ideas. After all, you are not entirely outsiders, Israel being a country founded by and for the Jewish people. As well, we know that your age and your experience in NFTY and your day and synagogue schools puts you in a good position to know what is important and what not.

What is driving this evaluation is the sense that we have lost our way a little. The Minister of Education in fact set up a blue-ribbon commission some months ago and their findings, released last week, state (you might disagree) that they think Israeli society has shown great signs of deterioration lately – no one agrees on what our values are any more, there is a greater gap between rich and poor than ever before and one of the biggest in the Western world, the economy is in trouble, many kids drop out of school, the crime rate is increasing, many don't care about their Jewish tradition, public morals are at a low, the environment is in danger of irreparable damage. The Minister advised to the commission members to take a holiday – they had apparently overheated while doing this important job, but even so, she is well aware that Israel does have some serious challenges ahead.

So, this is your chance to impact Israeli society. You don't have to worry about all the age groups at school – choose one and the Ministry will work out the rest.

The typical school day in Israel is 6½ hours long from 8am to 2.30pm. Broken into learning sessions of 45 minutes and taking out breaks and meals, each day has 7 class periods. Remember that in Israel, Sunday is a regular work and school day, whereas Friday is usually a short day, finishing at 12noon. There are optional after-school programs for which parents need to pay in order to enroll their children (school as a whole is fully supported by the State.

The week, therefore, looks like this:

Class#	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wed'day	Thursday	Friday	Stream#1	Stream#2
8.00-8.45								
8.50-9.35								
9.40-10.25								
M i d - m o r n i n g b r e a k								
10.40-11.25								
11.30-12.15								
L u n c h t i m e								
12.55-1.40						No Classes		
1.45-2.30								
After-School optional program								

If you use the streams to offer student choice, nominate which weekday becomes the day on which students can choose between what is written on that day and one or both streams.

You should choose 10 topics that are crucial to your curriculum; at least 4 of these must be covered every day and the rest at least 3 times a week. You can create up to 2 new subjects and can create up to 3 combination subjects (combining subjects that are listed). You can have up to a single days' worth of study streamed into thee areas to allow choice.

Work out the schedule and specify themes or topics to cover in certain subjects if you wish. Pay attention to the order of studies on each day and within the week. Generally people have most energy in the mornings; the period after lunch is the hardest and earlier in the week is higher-value learning time than Thursday afternoon and Friday.

These are the subjects you may choose from

Arabic	Hebrew Literature	Logic	Communication
Art	Israeli History	Math	skills
Biology	Jewish Culture	Music	World history
Chemistry	Jewish History	Physics	Zionist Thinkers
Citizenship	Jewish Law and	Russian	
Diaspora Jewry	Customs	Science	
English	Jewish Literature	Streams in	
Ethiopian	Jewish Thought	Judaism	
Field trips	and Ethics	Talmud	
Geography	Land of Israel	Torah	
Gym/Sport	Studies	Vocational	
Health	Middle East	training	
Hebrew Language	Studies		

By the end of the available time, you should be ready to present your proposal with
1. An opening presentation about your overall philosophy – what do you want the students to achieve and why.
2. A clearly written timetable for the week (write it on the poster boards that are provided)
3. Notable inclusions and exceptions

Please make sure that your recommendation will lead us towards the fulfillment of your ideal hopes and dreams for Israel. Tell us how that will come about in your presentation.

We thank you in the name of current and future students in Israel for offering your advice on this subject. After hearing your proposal and those of other groups, the Ministry will decide which proposal to adopt. The decision of the Ministry will be final and no correspondence will be entered into.

A CCAR delegation visits your group

Dear NFTY Friend,

We at the CCAR (Central Conference of American Rabbis) applaud you efforts to advise the Israeli Ministry of Education about the future of High school education in Israel and – by extension – about the future of our beloved country Israel. We here at the CCAR set about a similar task a few years ago in 1997 (admittedly over several days in the sunny climate of Florida). We have specially sent this letter to you as we feel that the deliberations of that conference – adopted afterwards in what is known as "The Miami Platform" may help you. We certainly hope it will. As we know you are under pressure, we have taken out the really important parts and even put in bold the key ideas and words. When you get home, you may wish to see the full Platform on the Web:
http://www.ccarnet.org/platforms/miami.html)

We ask you to look at these ideas and trust that you will find them compelling. If you do, please review and amend your recommendations to the Ministry of Education as you see fit.

With many thanks and looking forward to seeing you at Temple later this week!

Quotes from **'The Miami Platform'**, 1997
Adopted (in Miami!) by the Central Conference of American Rabbis

… The restoration of *Am Yisrael* to its ancestral homeland after nearly two thousand years of statelessness and powerlessness represents an historic triumph of the Jewish people, providing a physical refuge, **the possibility of religious and cultural renewal on its own soil**…

…We believe that the eternal covenant established at Sinai ordained a **unique religious purpose** for *Am Yisrael*. *Medinat Yisrael* , the Jewish State, is therefore unlike all other states. Its obligation is to **strive towards the attainment of the Jewish people's highest moral ideals** to be a *mamlechet kohanim* [a kingdom of priests], a *goy kadosh* [a holy people], and *l'or goyim* [a light unto the nations].

… Ultimately, *Medinat Yisrael* **will be judged** not on its military might but **on its character**.

… Even as *Medinat Yisrael* serves uniquely as the spiritual and cultural focal point of world Jewry, **Israeli and Diaspora Jewry are** inter-dependent, **responsible for one another**, and **partners in the shaping of Jewish destiny**. Each *kehilla* [Jewish community], though **autonomous and self-regulating**, shares **responsibility** for the fate

of Jews everywhere. By **deepening the** social, spiritual, and intellectual **relationship among the** *kehillot* **worldwide**, we can **revitalize Judaism** both in Israel and the Diaspora.

…While **Jews** can live Torah-centered lives in the Diaspora, only **in** *Medinat Yisrael* do they **bear the primary responsibility for the governance of society**, and thus may realize the full potential of their individual and communal religious strivings.

… The achievements of modern Zionism in the creation of the State of Israel, in **reviving the Hebrew language, in absorbing millions of immigrants, in transforming desolate wastes into blooming forests and fields, in generating a thriving new economy and society,** are an unparalleled triumph of the Jewish spirit.

How to access Internet for your group for this program:

There are several ways to access the Internet with your group (you need a computer for each 3-5 participants). **The best by far** is to use computers on-site during the activity to access to the Web. If you don't have an obvious place for this, like a youth room or library, ask ahead of time if there are office computers that someone authorized can be present and let you use. If none of this is possible, there are other options:

1. Arrange ahead of time for parents/staff/you/participants to bring laptops. These do not need to be connected to the Web, if you prepare ahead of time:
    o   Select then store a different site on each computer (using Explorer) in the following way:
        ▪   Activate <u>Favorites drop-down menu</u>⇒click <u>Add Favorite</u>⇒activate <u>Make available offline</u>⇒click '<u>customize</u>'; when it opens a new window called 'Offline Favorites Wizard', click '<u>next</u>', then where it asks "If this site contains…too?", click "<u>Yes</u>" and set it at <u>2 or 3</u> links deep. Finish the last few screens as appropriate till you get to '<u>Finish</u>'! Check off-line that this has worked. You will have one site per computer; a limited but functional solution.
    OR, if this is not possible
2. Select several organizations/schools for the group to work with and print out of information about them from the web. Again, you will have one site per group; limited but functional. OR
3. Simply use copies of the attached list, which itself can act as a resource (a less preferred option), OR
4. Ask some group members to volunteer between this meeting and the next to do the research and present back to the group next time. Unless it is a 'ccc' group – cohesive, curious and committed - this method is low on the list of ideal worlds, big-time. If you do choose this route, help your volunteer group members by emailing them the list.

IN EVERY CASE, volunteer to email your group members an electronic version of the full list so they can keep it and refer to it as they wish in the future.

EDUCATION IN ISRAEL (Sites in English or with an English section)

- Scholarships Offered by the Israeli Government to Foreign Students
- Scholarships for Study Abroad for Israeli Students
- Facts about Israel: Education
- Ministry of Education
- Council for Higher Education
- Higher Education in Israel
- Study Programs at Israeli Institutions of Higher Learning
- Study in Israel - Jerusalem Post guide
- Academy of the Hebrew Language
- Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities
- Israel Science Foundation
- Jewish National and University Library (Hebrew University, Jerusalem)
- Hebrew University - Mt. Scopus Library

LEARNING HEBREW

- The Hebrew Corner (Joint Authority for Jewish Zionist Education)
- My Hebrew Dictionary
- My Hebrew Picture Dictionary
- Learn Hebrew for Free - Foundation Stone
- Ulpan Directory
- Kibbutz Ulpan Programs
- Ulpan Akiva: International Hebrew Study Center

UNIVERSITIES

- Scholarships Offered by the Israeli Government to Foreign Students
- Bar-Ilan University
- Ben-Gurion University of the Negev
- Haifa University
- The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
- Geobase - Israel Regional Data Base
- GIS Center
- The Open University of Israel
- The Technion - Israel Institute of Technology
- Water Research Institute
- Tel Aviv University
- The Weizmann Institute of Science
- University Programs in Israel (WZO)
- The Hitchhiker's Guide to Israel Programs
- Teach and Study Program (Tel-Aviv)

OTHER INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

- Colleges in Israel
- Arava Institute for Environmental Studies
- Ashkelon Regional College
- Beit Berl College (Hebrew)

- College of Judea & Samaria
- Galilee College
- The College of Management (Hebrew)
- Hadassah College of Technology
- Holon Academic Institute of Technology
- Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya
- Jerusalem College of Engineering (Hebrew)
- Jerusalem College of Technology
- Jezreel Valley College
- Jordan Valley College
- Kibbutzim College of Education
- Law College, Ramat Gan (Hebrew)
- Levinsky College of Education
- Netanya Academic College
- Oranim College of Education
- ORT Braude College
- Practical Engineering College, Beer-Sheva (Hebrew)
- Raphael Recanati International School
- Ruppin Institute of Higher Education
- Sapir Academic College (Hebrew)
- Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies
- Shaar Hanegev College
- Sam Spiegel Film and Television School - Jerusalem
- Technological College of Beer Sheva (Hebrew)
- Tel-Hai Rodman College
- Western Galilee College
- Wingate Institute for Physical Education and Sport (Hebrew)
- Wingate Institute for Physical Education and Sport (English)
- MACAM98 - Israel Teachers' Colleges Network

THE ARTS
- Bezalel Academy of Arts and Crafts (Hebrew)
- Camera Obscura School of Art
- Haifa Ballet School
- Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance
- Samuel Rubin Music Academy (Tel-Aviv University)
- School of Visual Theater
- Shenkar College of Textile, Technology and Fashion

RESEARCH INSTITUTES & ACADEMIC JOURNALS
- Agricultural Research Organization (ARO), Ministry of Agriculture
- Arid Ecosystems Research Centre (AERC)
- Ariel Center for Policy Research (ACPR)
- Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, Bar-Ilan University
- MERIA - Middle East Review of International Affairs
- Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center
- Jacob Blaustein Institute for Desert Research (BIDR)
- Caesarea Edmond Benjamin de Rothschild Center for Capital Markets and Financial Risk Management
- Center for Social Policy Studies in Israel
- Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People (CAHJP) - Jerusalem
- Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies (Tel-Aviv University)
- Dinur Center for the Study of Jewish History (Hebrew University)
- Global Research in International Affairs
- Haifa University research authority

- Chaim Herzog Center for Middle East Studies and Diplomacy
- Institute for Jewish Policy Research
- Institute of Policy and Strategy
- Institute for Research on the Kibbutz and the Cooperative Idea
- International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism
- Israel Archives Association
- Israel Exploration Society
- Israel Oceanographic and Limnological Research (IOLR)
- Israeli Institute for Economic and Social Research (IIESR)
- Jabotinsky Institute in Israel
- Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies (Tel-Aviv University)
- JDC-Brookdale Institute
- Middle East Media and Research Institute (MEMRI)
- Minerva Center for Human Rights (Hebrew University)
- Molcho Center for Agricultural Research and Development in the Negev
- SENAT: Economic and Social Policy Reports from Israel
- Yitzhak Rabin Center for Israel Studies
- Stephen Roth Institute for the Study of Contemporary Anti-Semitism and Racism (Tel Aviv University)
- The Shalem Center
- Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History/ Historical Society of Israel
- Tel-Aviv University On-Line Databases - Bibligraphy of Zionism; Diplomatic Documents of the Yishuv (1945-46)
- Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace (Hebrew University)
- Van Leer Jerusalem Institute
- Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)
- Yad Ben-Zvi

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS
- List of Israeli Schools on the Internet
- School Twinning Project
- Amal Net
- ORT Israel
- Aviv Virtual School
- Eshel Hanassi Regional School
- The Hebrew University High School
- Hebrew Reali School, Haifa
- Israel Arts and Science Academy, Jerusalem
- Mercaz Harmony - International Center for Inclusion
- Reut Regional School
- Tel-Aviv University Technical High School
- Western Valley Regional High School
- Yarden High School

OTHER
- AICE - American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise
- The Center for Educational Technology (Hebrew)
- Children of the World Illustrate the Bible
- Alisa Flatow Memorial Scholarship Fund
- The Gesher Foundation
- Givat Haviva Education Center
- Hanoar Hatzioni
- Israel Participates in Netd@ys Europe 1999 - November 2000
- Jewish University in CyberspacE (J.U.I.C.E.)

- [Jewish Virtual Library](#)
- [The Joint Authority for Jewish Zionist Education](#)
- [Study Programs in Israel](#)
- [Study in Israel](#) - Jerusalem Post guide
- [Judaica Archival Project](#)
- [Learn@jts](#) - Jewish education through distance learning
- [Melitz - provider of informal educational services](#)
- [Mercaz Harmony - International Center for Inclusion](#) (special education)
- [Midreshet Sde Boker/Midreshet Ben-Gurion](#)
- [National Center for the Hebrew Language](#) (New York)
- [ORT Israel](#)
- [ORT Administration R&D and Training](#)
- [Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies](#)
- [Snunit Education Information Network](#)
- [This Month in Jewish History](#) (WZO)
- [University Student Department / World Zionist Organization](#)
- [World Zionist Organization](#) - Student and Academic Department
- [- Departamiento de Hagshamá](#) (Spanish)
- [WUJS Institute - Arad](#)