

RE-IMAGINE

לדמיין מחדש

Congregational School Conference

Sunday, November 22, 2026

12 Kislev 5787

Generously sponsored in memory of Rachel Velelli Glaser



Jewish Educational Services
An agency of The Associated



The Associated
Jewish Federation of Baltimore

A Dough Ma: Re-Imagining Sensory Play and Jewish Learning

ERIN BESER

Re-imagine learning through sensory play. You're invited to experience Adoughma's hands-on, sensory-regulating play and to practice our pedagogy of Jewish Sensory Play, a neurodiverse-affirming support structure that curates for creativity, while offering intentional access points to explore Jewish themes and reinforce curricular content in a highly engaging medium.

About Adoughma: Adoughma is Jewish Learning Venture's sensory play and sensory support program. We design accessible learning experiences and resources for caregivers, educators and community leaders to offer accessible, engaging Jewish learning experiences through sensory-regulating play. Adoughma integrates science-backed strategies from our Advisory Board of experts to scaffold and support learners of all ages and abilities in play.



Erin Beser hails from Baltimore, Maryland, but now lives on Philadelphia's Main Line with her husband Ethan, who serves as the Senior Rabbi at Temple Beth Hillel-Beth El, and her two children, Aldo and Sage. She is a passionate Jewish educator who has worked in a variety of Jewish educational spaces from synagogues and summer camps to Jewish day schools and currently serves as the Director of Disability Access at Jewish Learning Venture.

Navigating the Sea of Torah: A Traditional Approach for the Digital Age

SARA WOLKENFELD

The canon of traditional Jewish texts is vast and can be hard to navigate - and no one was more aware of this than the classical rabbis themselves. They write at length about the learning technologies that might be necessary in order to find one's way through the Jewish canon and emerge with meaningful lessons. In this class, we will ask: How might new digital technologies help learners at every level find Jewish texts that speak to our questions and curiosity? We'll talk about the challenges and opportunities of artificial intelligence, and how Jewish learning might evolve in a world transformed by machine learning.



Rabbanit Sara Tillinger

Wolkenfeld is the Chief Learning Officer at Sefaria, an online database and interface for Jewish texts. She is a member of Sinai and Synapses' working group on

Jewish Thought and Jewish Education for the Jewish Future, and of the Shalom Hartman Institute's Kogod Research Center, and is an advisor for AI & Faith. Sara also serves as Scholar-in-Residence at Ohev Sholom Congregation in Washington, DC, where her role includes overseeing the congregation's *mikvah*.

Sara is a PhD candidate at Gratz College and a recipient of the Walder Fellowship, and her current research and writing focus on the intersection between Jewish ethics and advancements in technology. Sara's writing has been published in *The Atlantic*, *First Things*, and *Religion Dispatches*, as well as numerous Jewish publications.

Sara and her husband, Rabbi David Wolkenfeld, live in Washington, DC with their family.

Kehilla: Classroom Management Through Games: The Power of Building Community

JILL EISEN

Re-imagine what play can do in your classroom! Team-building games are more than just icebreakers. They can help create a strong, inclusive *kehillah* where every student feels seen, valued, and connected. In this interactive session, we'll re-imagine games as powerful teaching tools that can strengthen relationships, reinforce lesson content, and bring new energy, whether high-energy or calming, into your curriculum. Come ready to play, learn, and experience practical activities you can bring back to your students right away. **Wear comfortable clothes because we'll be building *kehillah* by participating in the games ourselves!**



Jill Eisen has her BA from Penn State and two Masters from Baltimore Hebrew University. She works at Pearlstone Jewish Retreat Center as the Director of Program Partnerships where she entwines environmental and Jewish values. In addition to her work she is a talented Ma Jong player/teacher, Zentangle Teacher, Artist, as well as a Hamsa collector.

Heart and Soul - Learning Hebrew Through Israeli Songs

GILA EFRATI

Modern Israeli music is your gateway to Hebrew. Through it, you'll learn vocabulary, grammar, and conversational Hebrew in a way that's joyful, memorable, and uniquely engaging.

No more textbook drills. What you need is context, culture, and the ability to read Hebrew. We don't translate word by word - instead, we focus on the words that matter most, learn them, use them in sentences and conversation, and I'll share the story behind the song's creators. Once you understand what it's really about, the magic and the connection follow.



Gila Efrati is the Founder of Mifgashim B'Ivrit - Hebrew Conversations and a Hebrew educator with over 20 years of experience teaching children and adults across the United States.

Gila began her career in Israel, where she built and led a Drama major program at a high school, before moving to the US 25 years ago. She spent 20 years teaching Hebrew at Adas Israel Congregation in Washington, DC, and currently teaches Hebrew at Milton Gottesman Jewish Day School in Washington, DC. A musician and singer who has performed with various musical groups, Gila brings that same creative spirit into her teaching, using Israeli songs as a bridge to Hebrew language and culture. Her passion lies in connecting people - to the Hebrew language, to Israeli music, to each other and to the culture that shapes them both. Gila can be reached at mifgashimbivrit@gmail.com.

Step Outside: Jewish Learning in an Outdoor Classroom

DANIEL BARONDES

In this session, we'll explore how outdoor spaces can be a container for religious school learning. The outdoors is a living laboratory for discovery, joy and imagination. Whether you have a lawn with a few trees and shrubs, a garden, or a forest, focused outdoor learning has the power to transmit the essence of Jewish values, prayers and holidays, often in ways that in-classroom learning cannot. Through a combination of interactive activities, peer-to-peer learning, and tying into key Jewish frameworks, let's step outside into nature and re-imagine Jewish education.



Daniel Barondes currently works as the Land Stewardship and Program Associate at Pearlstone Jewish Retreat Center. Daniel is a passionate steward of the land who brings deep knowledge of the natural world and its cycles (and secrets!) to educational experiences at Pearlstone. He is also a bird watcher, primitive skills specialist, and budding potter. He is dedicated to spreading wonder and connection through right relationship with ourselves, nature, and one another.

Ancient Jewish Wisdom, Modern Modalities With 4Front

CHANAN GANS

What can ancient Jewish texts possibly have to say about the world we live in today? A lot more than you might think! In this interactive session, we'll re-imagine how we engage with timeless Jewish wisdom, discovering how ancient texts can speak to the issues, questions, and experiences that matter to us right now. Together, we'll re-imagine what text study can look and feel like, moving beyond traditional approaches and inviting creativity, curiosity, and personal connection. Then we'll get hands-on, exploring modern modalities that take ideas off the page and bring them to life. Participants will experience several creative approaches that can make Jewish texts feel relevant, accessible, and meaningful to learners today. You'll leave inspired to re-imagine how ancient wisdom can spark new conversations, connections, and possibilities in your own educational setting.



Rabbi Chanan Gans is the Assistant Director of 4Front, the Baltimore Jewish community's comprehensive teen initiative, where he develops and facilitates leadership, Jewish identity, and

experiential education programs for teens and Jewish professionals. A longtime Jewish educator, Chanan has served as a Head of School, high school rebbe, and educator in communities across the United States, Canada, and Israel. He received rabbinic ordination through Derech HaMelech in Jerusalem and is passionate about making timeless Jewish wisdom accessible, relevant, and engaging for today's learners. Chanan brings creativity and a wide range of modalities to his teaching, drawing on his experiences as an educator, coach, musician, singer-songwriter, and certified scribe. He lives in Baltimore with his wife and family.



MEET ARTIST IN RESIDENCE RACHEL BIKE

Rachel is a teaching artist working at the intersection of Jewish education, art and material

culture. Her academic background is in visual anthropology and archival science, and her current material practice is in pottery. Before becoming an art specialist at Milton Gottesman Jewish Day School in Washington, DC, she worked in Canada, the U.K., and the U.S. on cultural heritage and repatriation projects in partnership with Indigenous communities. She lives in Takoma Park, Maryland, with her partner and two young children, and spends as much time in nature as possible.

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