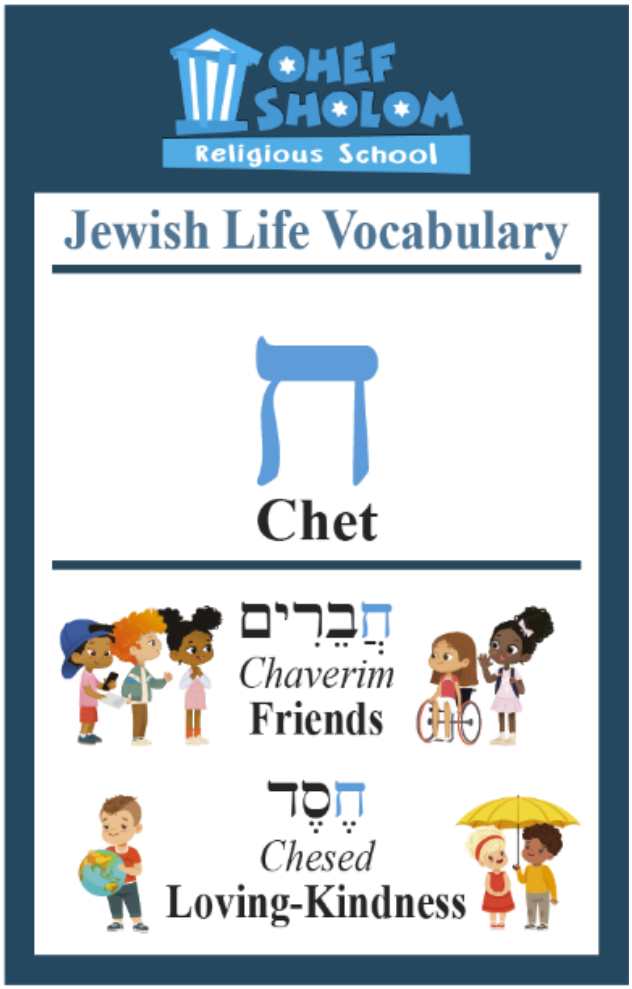
Jewish Life Vocabulary

An Onward Hebrew Toolkit



Graphic Design: Ohef Shalom Temple, Norfolk, VA

A project of Onward Hebrew

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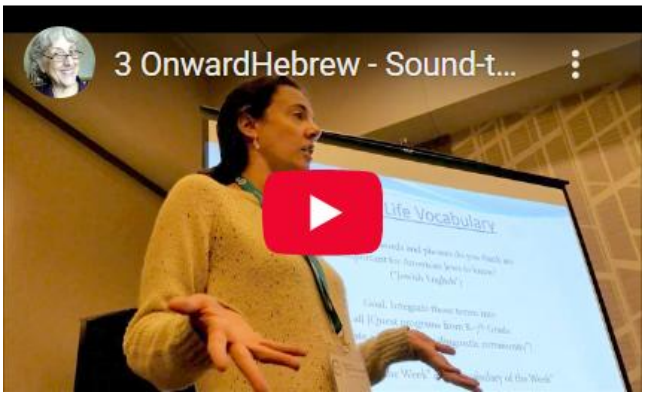
Contents

This video, featuring Rabbi Nicki Greninger (Temple Isaiah, Lafayette, CA), is a great place to start your orientation to Jewish Life Vocabulary.



Find it here: https://tinyurl.com/What-is-JLV

A ONE-PAGE OVERVIEW OF JEWISH LIFE VOCABULARY

WHAT?

Jewish Life Vocabulary (JLV) are Hebrew heritage words that have significance to Jewish culture, religion, and life. Examples are "*mazel tov*" (congratulations), "*shanah tovah*" (have a good new year) and "*etz hayim*" (tree of life). JLV words are different from those used in daily life like chair, table and door. While Onward Hebrew provides lists of potential JLV, specific choices are in the hands of each program. In quite a few settings, JLV is complemented by a Hebrew letter of the day.

Ideally, JLV are not seen as stand-alone words, but rather ones that are regularly infused into English sentences. For example:

- "*Hag same-ah*, Sam! I'm looking forward to lighting the third candle of our *hanukkiyah* tonight."
- "*Y'shar ko-ah*, Ellie! The question you just asked was really great."
- "*Kitah Bet* – bring your parents up to the *bimah* and ask them to stand under the *ner tamid* with you. *Todah*."

WHY?

JLV offers an easy-to-integrate strategy for opening the door to many aspects of Jewish life. Its approach is simple, intentionally infusing Hebrew into English sentences (for example, "I want to wish you a *hag same-ah*!" (a happy holiday). Over the years, learners become familiar with hundreds of words that help define and enrich us as Jews.

WHEN?

One to three words are introduced each session - they may be repeated from year-to-year or be completely new. Many programs publicize each week's JLV either through a family or all-synagogue email, a bulletin board post, or a sign that greets families on their arrival to the building.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

Option 1 - JLV is introduced by a staff member as a 1 to 3 minute segment of each session's *t'fillah* or assembly. Then, in their group or class setting, teachers reinforce the new vocabulary by infusing the words into regular English sentences and encouraging students to do the same.

Option 2 - Teachers are asked to directly introduce the new words to their learners and reinforce them during the day. Some also spend time reinforcing a Hebrew letter of the day.

EIGHT REASONS TO INTRODUCE JLV TO YOUR PROGRAM

If you are thinking about bringing JLV to your program, here are eight reasons to help you get to yes:

- **JLV is not an overwhelming endeavor for an educational program to implement –** Many education directors have introduced JLV as one of the first steps in transforming their Hebrew program from traditional in-class-only-textbook-learning to Hebrew that is infused throughout the learning day, helping create a Hebrew-rich environment. In addition, there are easily accessible (and free) resources that support student learning for many years.

- **JLV is not overwhelming for students nor teachers** – Only one to three words are introduced each week, usually in an informal atmosphere. Over the course of a year, students easily learn 25-75 Hebrew words.

- **JLV enriches a person's Jewish identity –** When children and adults have a nuanced understanding of JLV, doors are opened to insider participation and a richer Jewish journey.

- **JLV vocabulary is chosen by each program to match their learning goals, culture, needs and more; there are no proscribed lists** – JLV is highly personalized, with most programs creating an annual list of words that are then organized to match holidays, special events, grade level specific curriculum or introduced "just because." No need to rack one's brain to come up with the year's vocabulary - hundreds of words are offered from which a program may build their lists.

Greetings and Exclamations		
Hebrew	**Transliteration**	**Translation/Description**
בְּהַצְלָחָה	*b'hatzlaḫah*	Good luck
בְּסֵדֶר	*b'seder*	Okay; "in order"
בְּתֵיאָבוֹן	*b'tey-avon*	Bon appetite; enjoy your meal
בְּבַקָּשָׁה	*b'vakashah*	Please; you are welcome
בָּרוּךְ הַשֵּׁם	*barukḫ hashem*	Thank God
הַכֹּל בְּסֵדֶר	*hakol b'seder*	Everything is okay; "Everything is in order"
כֹּל הַכָּבוֹד	*kol hakavod*	Good job; "All the respect to you"

- **JLV learning doesn't take much time** – Many programs dedicate 2-4 minutes at the end of *t'fillah* (worship) or *k'hillah* (community time) to introduce the words of the week, with reinforcement offered by others inside (or even outside) the building.

- **JLV learning is not one-and-done** – After the week's words are introduced, teachers reinforce vocabulary with their students by finding ways to infuse the learned words into English sentences on an ongoing basis.

- **JLV moves beyond the classroom** – Many programs post signage or create newsletter articles with the week's JLV so that others in the congregation are introduced to words children that are being taught in the educational program. Parents and other adults who participate in the education program's *t'fillah* learn JLV as naturally as the students. And, it's quite easy for clergy to introduce select JLV into the synagogue's regular worship experiences, adult classes or events.

- **JLV supports the learning of Hebrew letters** – Quite a few synagogues attach a letter of the week to the Hebrew word(s) of the week. So if תּוֹרָה (*Torah*) and תּוֹדָה (*todah*; thank you) are taught the same week, the Hebrew letter *Tav* (ת) could be introduced. Or, when שָׁלוֹם (*shalom*; hello, goodbye, peace) and יוֹם (*yom*; day) are taught, the final *Mem* (ם) could be the letter of the week. Not surprisingly, a child who is exposed to letters of the week over multiple years has a great head start to learning to decode.

Graphic Design: Sukkat Shalom, Wilmette, IL

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN JLV AND ONWARD HEBREW'S SOUND-TO-PRINT APPROACH

Onward Hebrew,[1] an increasingly popular approach to the teaching of Hebrew in part-time/ synagogue settings, is based on a sound-to-print learning model.[2] Students hear the sounds of Hebrew *before* being taught to decode/read. With multiple paths created in the brain for Hebrew learning (especially kinesthetic and auditory), students more quickly become confident, competent, and happy Hebrew learners.

Jewish Life Vocabulary is one of four elements supporting Onward Hebrew's sound-to-print (S2P) learning approach. **JLV** may stand alone in an educational program or be combined with **Hebrew Through Movement**[3] and increased attention to regular ***t'fillah*** (worship experiences).[4] Together, these three elements lead to an aural/oral foundation for Hebrew **decoding**.

Jewish Life Vocabulary may be used in parallel with Hebrew textbooks from any publisher (e.g., Behrman House, Torah Aura) or curriculum designer (e.g., Jewish Education Center of

[1] https://www.onwardhebrew.org/ and https://www.facebook.com/groups/onwardhebrew
[2] https://www.onwardhebrew.org/sound-to-print.html
[3] http://HebrewThroughMovement.org and https://www.facebook.com/groups/hebrewthroughmovement
[4] https://www.onwardhebrew.org/hebrew-tfillah.html

Cleveland). JLV may be formally taught and/or the words may naturally be integrated into speech.

WORDS THAT FIT THE DEFINITION OF JLV

Onward Hebrew defines JLV as Jewish "heritage words." They increase one's connections to Jewish traditions, culture, life and people. A JLV list includes:

- **Concepts** - for example: תִּיקּוּן עוֹלָם (*tikkun olam;* repairing the world)
- **Objects** - for example: חֻפָּה (*ḥuppah;* wedding canopy)
- **Greetings** - for example: שָׁבוּעַ טוֹב (*shavu-a tov; have* a good week)

Consider two examples: A phrase like בִּרְכַּת הַמָּזוֹן (*birkat hamazon*; the blessing after meals) is the name of a ritual and the word מָרוֹר (*maror*; bitter herbs) is a food central to the telling of the *Pesaḥ* story. The use of Hebrew puts both of these in a Jewish context – the first holds more power than referring to a "blessing after eating" and the latter proclaims a deeper historical connection than "a bitter tasting vegetable." These count as JLV. On the other hand, a word like דֶּלֶת (*delet;* door) is not a concept or ritual object integral to Jewish life; thus, it is not defined as JLV.

Another core characteristic of Jewish Life Vocabulary is that these words are infused into English sentences that often offer context that helps with meaning-making. Here are two examples of Hebrew-into-English infusions:

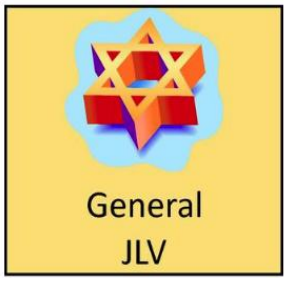
- "What is this week's פָּרָשָׁה?" (*parashah*; Torah portion)
- "You're going to Israel? נְסִיעָה טוֹבָה!" (*n'siyah tovah;* have a great trip)

This practice of infusion was identified by Dr. Sarah Bunin Benor, a professor at Hebrew Union College. She points out that Jews often speak "Jewish English," naturally inserting or infusing various vocabulary and terminology from Hebrew (and even Yiddish) into their everyday speech. When a group of people use Hebrew words this way, they create a "Hebrew metalinguistic community"[5] – a group that bonds itself together through use of Hebrew songs, prayers, vocabulary and culture – without the pressure of needing to become fluent in Hebrew. Instead, words are sprinkled into normative conversation, thus creating culture through shared language … a perfect learning model for part-time/synagogue educational programs.

[5] A phrase coined by Dr. Netta Avineri, Monterey Institute of International Studies.

CHOOSING JLV WORDS

While education directors and teachers could brainstorm JLV words from scratch, the Jewish Education Center of Cleveland developed vocabulary lists with hundreds of words from which to choose, as well as supporting materials for anyone interested in bringing JLV to their program. These resources include correctly spelled words in list form and on word cards, videos that offer pronunciation assistance, organizational charts, as well as examples from education programs that have already started down the JLV path. All are easily accessible from the Onward Hebrew website; to explore the landing page, click here.



There are two categories of word lists linked to the JLV webpage – General JLV (greetings, Jewish values, traditional books, life cycle, *kashrut*, Israel/World Jewry, etc.) and Calendar/Holiday JLV (lists for key vocabulary of each of the holidays and its observances). But the lists are neither all-encompassing nor prescriptive.

For example, the JLV list in the category of "Jewish Books" includes Hebrew names of books in the Torah, but does not include the Hebrew names of books in the rest of the Bible like שׁוֹפְטִים (*Shoftim*; Judges) and שְׁמוּאֵל א׳ (*Sh'muel Alef*; Samuel I). That said, each program is welcome to add any other words they wish and ignore ones that do not match their host institution's culture and curricular goals. Some educational programs will adopt the Hebrew names for the books of the Torah because their clergy and staff consistently refer to them in Hebrew (e.g., *B'reishit*, rather than Genesis). Other programs will ignore this section of the JLV list because they consistently use the English names (e.g, Exodus, Leviticus). Bottom line, educators and clergy choose the vocabulary that best supports their educational aspirations.

PERSONALIZING JEWISH LIFE VOCABULARY

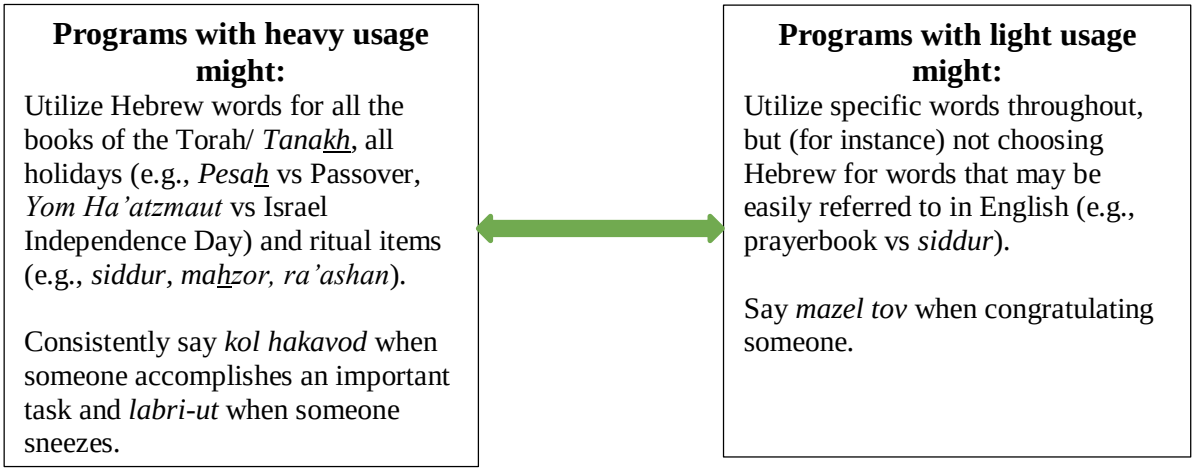
The JLV list is rather large. Each educational program may choose vocabulary that supports:

- their community (e.g, the greetings and concepts) or
- classes and learning programs with a specific focus (e.g., a Torah class).

These decisions may be made by an education director and/or clergy, a committee, or via an inclusive process with parents and/or students.

In choosing vocabulary, it is important to consider:

- **Current comfort with Hebrew usage*:*** There are some synagogue communities in which Hebrew is a strong priority and already heavily incorporated, whereas others use Hebrew sparingly.



An educational program or host organization's "placement" on this continuum is simply a starting point. Usage will shift over time, but an honest assessment provides an initial sense of how deeply a program may wish to dip into the Jewish Life Vocabulary lists.

- **Available time:** Realistically, students will remember one to three words introduced simultaneously. Less is more! That said, over the course of multiple years of JLV learning, students will gain more and more Hebrew vocabulary. Some programs introduce new words each year, whereas others reteach ones they consider to be core JLV and then add new words to fill out the calendar.

- **Vocabulary choices:** As previously noted, the JLV list is divided into two segments: the first includes a wide variety of categories (e.g., greetings, values/ethics, Jewish texts, life cycle), whereas the second is holiday-based. These broad divisions and their subsets make it easier for a program to:
    - Decide which vocabulary could be introduced to the entire community, for example, תּוֹדָה (*todah*, thank you) or לְשָׁנָה טוֹבָה *l'shanah tovah*, happy new year).[6]
        - One category could be chosen as the focus for a semester or year, with one to three words introduced each session and reinforced in the weeks following.

[6] In addition to the JLV word lists, programs should consider which additional vocabulary would be important to the community - for example names of internal programs (*Bonim, Ma'ayan, Shoresh*) or a community-wide core value or focus (*tzedek, tzedek tirdof;* justice, justice shall you pursue) or Israel-related vocabulary.

- A Hebrew "letter of the week" could serve as the organizing factor, with one to three words from different categories introduced.[7]
- The Jewish holiday cycle could anchor the lists, with a focus on holiday greetings, ritual objects and concepts.[8]

Date	Letter	JLV
9/16	Shin	Shanah tova
9/23	Aleph	Orchim
9/30	Sin	Chag sameach
10/7	Bet	Boker Tov
10/14	Hey	Yom huledet sameach
10/21	Gimmel	G'milut chasidim
10/28	Fay	Refuah shleimah
11/4	Kaf	Kol ha kavod
11/18	Tav	Todah
12/2	Chet	Chag sameach
12/9	Nun	Nes gadol

These organizing principles may vary by year – for example, one year using holidays and the next using the Hebrew *Alefbet*.

On a more informal level, decisions need to be made regarding the specific vocabulary that staff will integrate into their normative in-English conversations. For example:

- "In your *siddur*, turn to page 14."
- "*Mazal tov* to you and your family!"
- "Let's do the correct *b'rakhah* before eating snack."

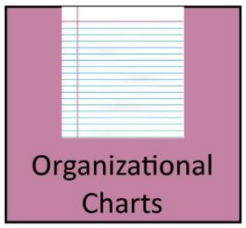
- Decide which vocabulary to assign to educators working with specific curriculum.
  - These could be integrated into specific subject learning (for example, the Hebrew words related to birth introduced when students are exploring this element of the life cycle).
  - Clergy and B'Mitzvah tutors could consciously teach/use the terminology associated with the Torah or synagogue space when involved in preparations.
  - Hebrew Through Movement teachers are probably already integrating some JLV vocabulary into their lessons, especially concrete ones related to holidays, rituals, prayers and blessings.[9]

The lists on the website have been provided in a Word document, rather than a PDF, to make it easier for a program to develop its own organizational charts by copying and pasting the desired vocabulary.

[7] Many educational programs organize their lists to be able to include a letter of the week, for example, introducing the letter ס *Samekh* in the week that סוּכָּה (*sukkah*) and סְלִיחָה (*s'lihah;* excuse me) are taught. In addition to JLV and the letter of the week introduced by clergy at the end of *t'fillah*, education directors often ask all teachers spend a few minutes engaging learners with the letter so as to reinforce its shape. See Appendix B for a variety of ways to do this; this resource may also be found on this page (scroll down to the section, "Planning Resources for JLV").

[8] Programs that are a couple of years into Hebrew Through Movement will find that their students have already learned a number of holiday-related JLV, though reinforcement from a variety of angles is always helpful.

[9] Note that on all lists, words that are part of Hebrew Through Movement's earlier curriculum guides are indicated by an asterisk; this helps HTM teachers decide which words to prioritize over time.

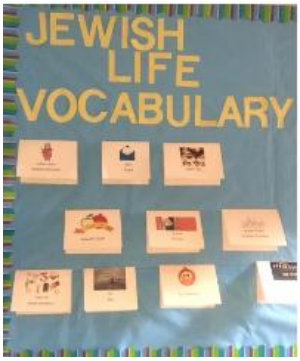


Examples of organizational charts are linked from the Jewish Life Vocabulary section of the OnwardHebrew.org website. Scroll down on this page and then click on the icon that matches the one on the left to gain access to pre-made blank charts, as well as filled-in samples. The one, below, integrates the introduction of Hebrew letters with relevant holiday vocabulary; see Appendix A (starting on page 15) to view a full year's plan using this format.

Date	Upcoming Holiday	Hebrew Letter of the Week	Jewish Life Vocabulary (mostly but not entirely based on Letter of the Week)	Suggestions for introduction	Words to review
10-Sep		(First day)		Introduce concept of JLV to the community!	
17-Sep	Rosh Hashanah	Shin ש	***Sh**anah tovah*, ***sh**ofar*	When someone says *shanah tovah*, another person responds "happy new year!" and yet another person says *shofar* and blows the *shofar* [i.e., a "random" unexpected chain of events that gets set off.]	
24-Sep	Yom Kippur	Mem מ	***M**ahzor*, *shanah tovah u'**m**etukah*	Candies handed out (tossed?) on the *m'tukah* part of the greeting. Something about grabbing a prayerbook, but "no, it's a *mahzor*."	*Shanah tovah* (add *m'tukah*), *shofar*
8-Oct	Sukkot	Samech ס	***S**ukkah*, *s'khakh (siddur)*	"What's that on top of your *sukkah*?" "*S'khakh*!" "Bless you! No, but what's on top?" …	*mahzor* (as opposed to siddur)

IMPLEMENTING JEWISH LIFE VOCABULARY

- **Introducing the JLV initiative to your community:** Depending on your community's potential reaction to increased Hebrew usage, a Jewish Life Vocabulary initiative could fly under the radar and simply start, OR be intentionally introduced. If the latter, consider a variety of ways to increase exposure:
  - An article in the host institution's bulletin
  - A video,[10] blog,[11] or podcast posted to the program's website.
  - Social media
  - A prominent bulletin board or display[12] >>>>>
  - A sermon from the pulpit or more generalized speech/presentation



Source: Unknown

And what are the potential messages an educational program might share with its stakeholders? These, below, are all offered for use and adaptation:

- Jewish Life Vocabulary includes Hebrew words or phrases that increase one's connections to Jewish people, traditions, culture and life. JLV includes concepts (*tikkun olam*), objects (*huppah*) and greetings (*shavu-a tov*), woven quite naturally into English sentences.

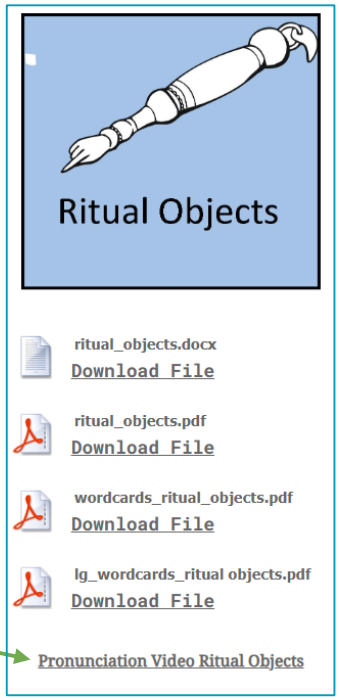
[10] Heather Erez, education director at Temple Beth El of Boca Raton created these VERY short videos that share word meanings with teachers, students, parents and others in the congregation: https://www.onwardhebrew.org/jlv-visual-resources.html

[11] Rabbi Ruth Adar's blog offers examples of simple, fun explanations of some common JLV terms here: *Yasher Ko-ah* https://tinyurl.com/y7l6ctz6, *Humash* https://tinyurl.com/ybcl8cmt and *Shavu-a Tov* https://tinyurl.com/y962ster.

[12] Sample displays may be found on this webpage: https://www.onwardhebrew.org/jlv-shared-resources.html

- Words on a *Jewish Life* Vocabulary list are chosen because they enrich one's *Jewish life* and often deepen a person's Jewish educational understandings and connections.
- When a group of people consistently infuse Hebrew words into English sentences, they create a community that bonds itself together through use of Hebrew in songs, prayers, vocabulary and culture – without the pressure of needing to become fluent Hebrew speakers.
- Integrating JLV into an educational program moves Hebrew learning beyond the walls of a classroom, thus creating a richer Hebrew environment for all. Hebrew simply becomes a natural part of one's Jewish being.
- Students learn key Hebrew words and phrases connected to Jewish life and practice.

- **Introducing vocabulary to staff**: When bringing Jewish Life Vocabulary to an educational program, it is important to acknowledge that part-time teachers have limited prep and teaching time. With the introduction of JLV, teachers have the added challenge of integrating Hebrew vocabulary into their other teaching priorities. Some insertions may be easy enough because the words are already part of the curriculum ("Has anyone been to a *b'rit milah* or *simhat bat*?"), but other integrations could be more difficult ("Mia is sick today. Who would like to text her with a *r'fu-ah shleimah,* our wish that she has a full recovery?).



  In addition to finding the space for this in their heads, hearts and curriculum, non-Hebrew speaking teachers and teen assistants face the added challenge of learning to pronounce, remember and comfortably use vocabulary. To mitigate these challenges, the JLV lists provide each word in Hebrew print, transliteration and English translation. In addition, **videos** linked on the Onward Hebrew JLV webpages include pronunciation of words so that teachers, teen assistants and other staff may hear and practice as many times as needed.[13]

  Finally, it helps if those who are comfortable with Hebrew (often the professional staff) teach the week's words to students in a group setting (e.g., as part of *t'fillah* or another consistent community time), with teachers being asked to reinforce the words with their students.

  But staff (teachers, teen assistants and others) need additional supports – ones that bolster those for whom this feels like a Herculean task and ones that ensure that everyone

[13] Linked from here: https://www.onwardhebrew.org/jewish-life-vocabulary.html. Click on "General JLV" or "Calendar/Holiday JLV" to find the words in list form, as well as on word cards. At the bottom of each list there is a hyperlink called "Pronunciation Video (*and the name of the topic*)." For example, here is the pronunciation video in the Greetings category: https://youtu.be/kATA6SjEwr0.

teaches/utilizes/reinforces the vocabulary correctly. To this end, an educational program might:

- Introduce, discuss and reinforce pronunciation of new JLV in a staff meeting.
- Create short videos/reels that introduce new JLV, with links posted weekly in the staff newsletter. [The screenshot to the right is from a video series posted by Temple Beth El of Boca Raton. The videos are found here.]

- Encourage one-on-one conversations between teachers and members of the leadership team to discuss implementation strategies. Provide specific ideas and materials for use with learners (activity suggestions, pictures, videos, etc.).
- Identify the program as a "metalinguistic community" (of course, not using that scholarly phrase). This means celebrating and enjoying Hebrew and finding intentional ways of drawing its members together through the use of this very special language to Jews worldwide, throughout history.
- Offer incentives for reinforcing or using the new vocabulary.

- **Introducing vocabulary to students**: As noted above, vocabulary may be introduced/ reinforced in a community setting or in smaller groups facilitated by individual teachers.
  - During *t'filah/k'hillah*/assembly time staff might:
    - Offer a skit or other kind of presentation to introduce the JLV terms. These may be developed and/or presented by a synagogue professional, teacher committee, teen assistants, or a group of students.
    - Use music - either an existing song that reinforces the term(s) or a newly composed one.
    - Illustrate the term with a story, poster or digitally projected slide with the term and perhaps an illustration.
    - Ask students and others to create their own English sentence that infuses the newly learned word(s) and then share with the group. Bonus points for stringing 2-3 words together, especially ones that may have been learned in past sessions. Someone might offer, "When I looked up to see the סְכָךְ (*s'khakh*) on the top of the סֻכָּה (*sukkah*), I accidently bumped into Zac so I said סְלִיחָה (*s'lihah*, excuse me)."
  - A teacher working with a group of students might:
    - Also ask students to create English sentences that infuse the newly learned word.

- Write a sentence or two on the board (or projected on a screen) with blanks where JLV words are missing, along with a list of words to be inserted. Call on students to fill in the blanks with the correct JLV. [Option: Ask pairs of students to work together to fill in the blanks and then share responses as a group.]

> Our family is going to Aiden's for the third night of Ḥanukkah. We were asked to bring along our _____, along with candles. I've decided to also take the _____ that my grandma bought when she was in Israel – it might help me win when we play the game! My big challenge will be trying to eat just one _____ - Aiden's dad is an amazing cook, so I might gobble up 4 or 5!
>
> WORD BANK: s'vivon, l'vivah, ḥanukkiyah

  A teen assistant (or a group of them) could create these for teachers to use – just double-check that their sentences match the correct nuanced use of each word.
- Create a mini-lesson where students are asked to infuse JLV into English sentences. For example, explore times when they have seen or experienced great examples of הַכְנָסַת אוֹרְחִים (*haḥnasat orḥim*, welcoming guests). Encourage students to use the phrase each time they respond.
- Take a "field trip" around the synagogue to find ritual objects or other items learned as part of JLV.
- Break students into small groups for a non-related activity using JLV ("Check the photo you pulled from the box and make three matching groups: *kippah*, *t'fillin* and *m'zuzzah.*")

- **Reinforcing Hebrew vocabulary already introduced**: Jewish Life Vocabulary, as well as other Onward Hebrew initiatives, help spread Hebrew throughout the learning day. This may not seem revolutionary, but much traditional Hebrew learning is post-holed in a specific block of time (e.g., direct teacher instruction 9:30-10:30 on a Sunday morning … and that's it). There are ways to normalize JLV throughout a morning or afternoon session:
  - Be intentional in reinforcing *previously* taught words by:
    - Reviewing the previous week's words prior to introducing new ones (a planned-in-advance calendar[14] will support this effort).
    - Encouraging teachers to use words in that week's learning, as well as two to three weeks after.

[14] Sample calendars and organizational charts are linked from the JLV webpage: https://www.onwardhebrew.org/jewish-life-vocabulary.html. Click on the icon that says, "Organizational Charts."

- Offering rewards for usage of words previously introduced. These could be small (a high five, a "*Yofi*" sticker placed on a user's clothing that day, an Alefbet pencil,[15] etc.) or a bit larger (coupon to an ice cream or coffee shop).

- Consider posting labels for objects, places, and people learned as vocabulary.[16] Be clever about this – perhaps on a given Shabbat, the rabbi, cantor and a *shali-ah tzibur* wear a nametag giving their JLV-introduced profession.
- Sharing the upcoming (or past) Hebrew vocabulary with students, parents, congregants, volunteer leadership or others interested in JLV:
  - On a bulletin board with a growing collection of current and past words[17]
  - In a bulletin article
  - In a blog or podcast
  - On social media
  - From the *bimah* (pulpit)

HEARING FROM AN EXPERIENCED DIRECTOR

In this short video, Debbie Morosohk, director of an Onward Hebrew program, explains how she implements JLV in her synagogue setting and offers a show-and-tell of sample materials.

https://youtu.be/03LkCx5Gb6o

A FINAL WORD

For many part-time/synagogue educational programs, Jewish Life Vocabulary serves as low-hanging fruit. For directors, it is relatively easy to implement. For students of all ages, it builds a strong connection to Hebrew, Jewish culture and Jewish people over time and space. It is easy and has the potential to be a lot of fun!

Give it a try!

[15] An internet search will uncover a wide variety of these.
[16] Premade labels may be ordered from the JECCMarketplace.com. In addition, the JLV webpage includes links to large font word cards for each of the vocabulary offered in this guide; these are a free download.
[17] Premade word cards are available for free and immediate download via the "General JLV" and "Calendar/Holiday JLV" links on the webpage: https://www.onwardhebrew.org/jewish-life-vocabulary.html

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE PLANNING CHART

Click here to download this on a separate Word Document that will allow for easy editing.

Date	Upcoming Holiday	Hebrew Letter of the Week	Jewish Life Vocabulary (mostly but not entirely based on Letter of the Week)	Suggestions for introduction	Words to review
10-Sep		(First day)		Introduce concept of JLV to the community!	
17-Sep	Rosh Hashanah	Shin שׁ	***Sh****anah tovah,* ***sh****ofar*	When someone says *shanah tovah*, another person responds "happy new year!" and yet another person says *shofar* and blows the *shofar* [i.e., a "random" unexpected chain of events that gets set off.]	
24-Sep	Yom Kippur	Mem מ	***M****ahzor, shanah tovah u'****m****etukah*	Candies handed out (tossed?) on the *m'tukah* part of the greeting. Something about grabbing a prayerbook, but "no, it's a *mahzor*."	*Shanah tovah* (add *m'tukah*), *shofar*
8-Oct	Sukkot	Samech ס	***S****ukkah,* ***s****'khakh (siddur)*	"What's that on top of your *sukkah*?" "*S'khakh*!" "Bless you! No, but what's on top?" …	*mahzor* (as opposed to siddur)
15-Oct	Simchat Torah	Tav ת	***T****orah,* ***T****odah*	Stand in circle, hand students the Torah, they respond with *todah*, pass to next person, etc.	
22-Oct		Sin שׂ	***S****ame-ah,* ***s****imhah*	Relate back to *Simhat Torah*	

29-Oct		Koof ק	***K**adosh, (kos) **Kiddush***	Compare regular random cup to Kiddush cup, what makes it holy/special?	
5-Nov		Bet ב	***B**oker tov, **b**'vakasha*	A fun good morning skit with *b'vakashah* and *todah* mixed in.	*Todah*
12-Nov		Gimmel ג	***G**'milut <u>h</u>asadim, **g**adol /katan*	Play with something that is small and big, like a *Kiddush* cup.	*Kos kiddush katan, Kos kiddush gadol*
18-Nov		Hey ה	*Yom **h**uledet, **h**akol b'seder*	"I hear today's your birthday! *Yom Huledet Same-a<u>h</u>*! How's it going?" "*Hakol b'seder*!"	*Same-a<u>h</u>* (add to yom huledet)
3-Dec		Nun נ	***N**er/**n**erot, **n**es gadol hayah sham, **n**er tamid*	Counting how many *nerot* will be needed in preparing for *<u>H</u>anukkah*; introduce phrase based on letters on dreidel sides	*Gadol*
10-Dec	<u>H</u>anukkah	Chet ח	***<u>H</u>**ag, **<u>H</u>**anukkah, **<u>H</u>**anukiyah* OR ***<u>h</u>**odesh, **<u>H</u>**eshvan*	Light the *<u>h</u>anukiyah* (with blessings) and wish one another *<u>H</u>ag same-a<u>h</u>*	*<u>H</u>ag same-a<u>h</u>, nes gadol hayah sham, ner/nerot*
7-Jan		Aleph א	*Aron hakodesh* *OR eretz*		*Kodesh/kadosh*
21-Jan		Tzadee צ	**Tz**edakah, **tz**edek, ei**tz**	Everyone gets a coin and is asked to donate *tz'dakah*. Sing a version of *Eitz <u>H</u>ayim* song.	
28-Jan	Tu B'shevat	Tet ט	***T**u Bish'vat, **t**ov (<u>h</u>odesh **t**ov, boker **t**ov, erev **t**ov, shavua **t**ov*, etc.)	A fun-something with all the "___ *tov*" greetings!	
4-Feb		Kaf כ	***K**avod, **K**ol ha**k**avod*		
11-Feb		Pay פ	***P**urim, **P**esa<u>h</u>*	Upbeat dividing of ritual objects (or photos) into the right holiday grouping.	

25-Feb	Purim Carnival / Purim		*Purim / Hag Purim same-ah! M'gillat Ester*	*M'gillah* as compared to *Torah*	*Hag, same-ah, Torah*
4-Mar		Zayin ז	***Z'**ro-a, oz**nei Haman*	Purim and Passover are close together – use these two objects to differentiate between one and the other	
11-Mar		Tzadee צ ץ	*Ma**tz**ah, hame**tz***	Something fun that distinguishes between *matzah* and *hametz*.	
18-Mar	Pesach	Dalet ד	***D**ayeinu, haga**dd**ah*		*z'ro-a*
25-Mar		Ayin ע	*Eitz (hayim), Omer*	"*Pesah* was last week! Have you been counting the *Omer*?"	
15-Apr	Yom Ha'atzmaut	Yud י	***Y**om: **Y**om Ha'atzmaut, **Y**om Ha'zikaron, **y**om tov, **Y**israel*		*Tov*
22-Apr		Vav ו	***V**'tzivanu*		*Mitzvah*
29-Apr		Resh ר	***R**'fu-ah sh'leimah, **R**osh Hodesh*		
6-May		Lamed ל	***L**'hitra-ot, **l**'hayim*	"We're almost done with the school year and it will be time to say *l'hitraot*!" "School is almost out! *L'hayim*!"	
20-May	Shavuot	(last day)			

APPENDIX B: REINFORCING THE SHAPES OF HEBREW LETTERS

A PDF of just these 3 pages may be downloaded from https://tinyurl.com/Hands-on-Letters

One of the biggest obstacles to students learning to decode Hebrew well, is them not being able to identify all the of the Hebrew AlefBet. While it is true that some of these holes in learning are caused by absences (it's hard to learn something if not in attendance), some of the issue may be impacted by minimal reinforcement of letter shapes, names and sounds.

Research from the science of reading indicates that when a learner has to draw/write a letter from memory, they are demonstrating more permanent learning. This, as compared to shaping them with wiki sticks, pipe cleaners, clay, or their own bodies. Younger students would benefit from participating in the first set of learning activities (below) that reinforce the shapes of specific letters (scroll down to the section that begins mid-page), whereas older students should work towards the ultimate goal of writing/drawing from memory (see the section that begins towards the bottom of page 20). Depending on the age of students, time available and chosen materials, letter practice could be scheduled for 5-20 minutes each learning session.

> *A note regarding the embedded links, below: Some potentially unfamiliar items include a link to the product online; please feel free to check around for better pricing and other packaging options. An educational program might purchase a class set of many of these materials and find a way to shift them between groups of students after each session. For example, one week the first graders might have use of the glitter glue and the next week a class of fifth graders could use the supply.*

Students who would benefit from learning the general shapes of Hebrew letters could:

1. **Trace their fingers along paper** (or sandpaper) cut into letter shapes with an Ellison die cut machine.

2. **Decorate a letter shape with markers** or **small, creative materials** (sequins, beads, etc.) The letter could be hand drawn on paper and photocopied so each student has a copy, or cut out from an Ellison die cut machine.

3. **Decorate a page with Hebrew stickers** (a link is here).

4. **Stamp** with Hebrew letter stamps (a link is here).

5. **Eat Hebrew AlefBet cookies** (a link is here).

6. **Scratch off** round circles that have been placed over the letter of the day so students "discover/uncover" it (a link is here).

7. **Count the number of Hebrew letters in the room** that match the letter of the day (these could be on posters already in the room, or multiple copies of a few different letters placed around the room).

8. **Count the number of times they find the "letter of the day" on a page** from a children's book in Hebrew (e.g., *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*) or a *siddur* (prayerbook). The page could be projected on a white board or printed on a piece of paper shared by pairs of students working together.

9. **Find and cut out (or simply circle or highlight) the letter of the day** from newspaper headlines or magazine article titles. [Someone traveling back from Israel could bring these.]

10. **Reveal a letter** by washing watercolor paint over a piece of white paper to discover the letter of the week written boldly with a white crayon. *This watercolor paint will not be able to stick to the crayon, revealing a letter's shape.*

11. **Sing or chant the letter's name** while decorating the letter. For example, "Alef, Alef, Alef" (pause) "Alef Alef"). Pairs of students could come up with their own (much better) chants.

12. **Chant instructions for drawing** the letter. A *Lamed* (ל) might be "line down, move to the right, line down, move down to the left diagonally."

Students ready to draw letters could be given:

1. **Scented markers** (a link is here)

2. **Felt tip markers** (a link is here)

3. **Dry erase markers and a personal white board** (a link is here) or laminate white sheets of cardstock in place of the white boards

4. **Dry erase markers to be used on a window** [*This definitely needs permission from your education director and/or maintenance staff prior to doing.*]

5. **Multi-colored pens** (a link is here)
6. **Puff paint**
7. **Glitter glue**
8. **"Glitter Gel Double Outline Markers"** (a link is here)
9. **A sensory squishy bag** (info and recipes are here)
10. **Black scratch-off art paper** (a link is here)

11. **A tray of wet sand**
12. **Shaving cream** (unscented)
13. **Fingerpaint**

14. **Small flat stones and permanent markers** (a link is here if these stones are hard to find outside in your locale)
15. **Chalk** (for use on a sidewalk or safe area of the parking lot)
16. **A personal notepad** and pen, pencil or marker