



2008 – 2009
Class Catalog



DISCOVER MIDRASHA IN BERKELEY

WHEN and WHERE is Midrasha?

- Sunday mornings, 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. at 1301 Oxford Street, Berkeley
- Thursday afternoon Tanach/Talmud class option (not required), 4:15 – 6:15 p.m. at 1630 Bancroft Way, Berkeley
- Tuesday evening Mystical Visions of God class option (not required), 6:15 – 7:15 p.m. at 1316 University Avenue, Berkeley
- Weekend retreats at Camp Newman in Santa Rosa

WHO will you find at Midrasha?

- 8TH-12TH grade students: amazing friends who will change your life!
- Dynamic, energetic and knowledgeable teachers
- All kinds of Jews! Reform, Orthodox, Renewal, Conservative, Unaffiliated, Atheist, Questioning, Cultural, Rebellious, Humanist Jews and new ones we'll define together!



WHAT is Midrasha?

- It's about being with friends, learning new things and making a difference in a Jewish environment.
- It's not just the classes (it's also the retreats and the special trips).
- It's THE place to be on Sunday mornings (or Thursday afternoons or Tuesday evenings).

WHY come to Midrasha?

- Engage in passionate learning
- Discuss what really matters to you with open-minded teachers
- Hang out with your old friends and make new ones (while munching baguettes)
- Change the world
- Discover a safe place to express your Judaism

Join us
for a life-changing
experience you will
never forget!



CLASSES: 8TH – 9TH GRADE CORE: FIRST HOUR

“Midrasha has helped me in a concrete way remember every week that I am part of a 5000-year history and people.

Because of Midrasha I know I need Judaism in a real and intentional way and I know I will seek it next year.”

Sarah Breiner, Class of 2008



Gesharim (8th Grade Core)

Devra C. Aarons and Sacha J. Kopin

8th Graders! Start your Midrasha experience with an exciting chance to meet Jewish teens from around the Bay Area as you grapple with modern ethical issues and take action to address homelessness, discrimination and injustice. Doing good never felt this right.

Etgar (9th Grade Core)

Noemi Hollander and Anna Martin

Who am I? What do I believe? Why are other Jews different than I am? How are they the same? Explore issues of Jewish identity and come up with surprising answers. The class includes participation in three amazing weekend retreats.

CLASSES: 10TH – 12TH GRADE CORE: FIRST HOUR

BIBLE:

“I know wherever I go I will be able to build a strong community, thanks to the tutelage of Midrasha and the wonderful people that make it truly unique.”

Zoe Levine,
Class of 2008



What Was It Like?—Exploring the Torah Through Improvisation, Role Playing and Theater Games

Roni Alperin

What was it like for Abraham to be told to kill his most loved son? Did Moses feel confident as a prophet? Why didn't Queen Esther just go ahead and tell the king to stop Haman? We will explore these ideas and more by stepping into the world of Bibliodrama, an interactive, improvisational class where we will create our own midrash about the inner thoughts of biblical characters (and scenery!) and what the text isn't telling us.

Hedwig, Oprah and The Story of Creation: An Investigation into Your Mind

Day Schildkret

In this unprecedented class on one the most fascinating subjects—your mind—we will discuss the story of creation, the origin of love and the birth and death of the human ego. Taught through song (Hedwig and the

Angry Inch), TV and ancient/contemporary text, we will explore a subject matter that is guaranteed to awaken your consciousness and change your life profoundly. Plus, a guest appearance by the talk show host, Oprah Winfrey.

Tanach Tapestry

Bunny Pearlman

Through a variety of fiber art techniques such as embroidery, appliqué, weaving, and felting, students will work singly and in groups creating tapestries of favorite stories from the Tanach. A sewing machine will be available.

Torah and the Planet

Greg Newmark

From the beginning Torah is literally about the planet and how we live on it. This class will take seriously topics ranging from the Big Bang and biodiversity to the wonders of nature and waste management to ask the question, “How does the Torah teach us to live in our physical world?”

CLASSES: 8TH – 9TH GRADE ELECTIVES: SECOND HOUR

Two Jews, Three Opinions: Debating Hot Topics

Greg Newmark

Looking at issues from dating ethics to gay marriage, from keeping kosher to City Car Share, from women in combat service to women in the Torah service, from immigrating to Israel to emigrating from Israel, from euthanasia to youth in Northern California, from going to the mikve to standing for Hatikva, from ethical compliance to rooting for the Giants—OK, you get the picture.

We'll study Jewish source material and then debate our opinions.



The Golem, American Jews and Comics

Sacha J. Kopin

What do the graphic novels Superman and Wolverine have in common? And what do they have to do with Judaism? Discover the answers to these questions and more! Together we'll explore why super heroes lend themselves to telling the Jewish experience and learn about the first Jewish superhero, the Golem.

Making Midrash: Storytelling / Toratelling

Noemi Hollander

Did Esther really want to be Queen? What was Joseph feeling when he got thrown in the pit? We all have favorite Bible stories but when we look at the text we come away with more questions than answers. In this class we'll fill in the gaps and shed light on the questions with our own imaginative retellings of old stories.

8 – 12 GRADERS



CLASSES: 10TH – 12TH GRADE ELECTIVES: SECOND HOUR

OPEN TO ALL 8-12 GRADERS

Beginning Conversational Hebrew

Bunny Pearlman

After all those years of studying prayerbook Hebrew, would you like to learn to actually SAY something? This course is for those at beginning conversational Hebrew levels.

Talmud

Muni Schweig

This is a class in which the intellectually active can come alive as we reconnect to the Talmud, one of the classical texts of Judaism, from the perspective of who we are today.

Art and The Contemporary

Jewish Museum Erica Crowell

If you're interested in making art and exploring the relationship between art and stories, this is the class for you. The class will include a few visits to the new Contemporary Jewish Museum in San Francisco and the possibility of participating in NPR's Story Corps booth, housed at the museum.

Etz Chaim He: Keeping Our Tree of Life Sacred

Devra C. Aarons

Through an exploration of our five senses—taste, touch, smell, sight, and hearing—we will reconnect to the world around and within us. Classes will include hikes, taste testing heirloom tomatoes and breathing in the world around us.

The Jewish Art of Amulet Making

Anna Martin

Have you or a close friend or relative ever suffered a serious illness or difficulty—be it physical, emotional, or spiritual?? Judaism has an ancient tradition of calling on God and angels to protect against evil spirits and to ask for tikkun, healing. We'll study the historic and modern role of amulets and make our own protective amulet for ourselves or others who might need a little healing.



KESHER

(Note, you MUST also be signed up for a Keshet class in order to attend Keshet retreats.)

10TH Grade – Keshet Aleph

Roni Alperin

Study Israeli history, culture, politics and current events.

11TH – 12TH Grade

Keshet Bet

Day Schildkret

Study Jewish thought and spirituality, including views of God and holiness, mysticism, and historical thinkers.



CLASSES: 8TH – 9TH GRADE **ELECTIVES: THIRD HOUR**

Women In The Bible: Warriors, Prophets, Lovers and Mothers

Anna Martin

Where are all the women? Women in the Bible are fewer and farther between than the men, but they have some interesting roles to play: warriors, prophets, mothers, and lovers... Open to women and men, this class will explore the more wild stories you probably didn't discuss in religious school. We will also explore the tradition of using midrash to explain some of the more "troubling" stories in the Torah and perhaps write a few ourselves.

Theology Through Film

Sacha J. Kopin

Using scenes from feature films like the Star Wars saga, Ghost, The Matrix, Dogma, Raiders of the Lost Ark and Field of Dreams we will discuss questions like: Is God all-knowing? Where does evil come from? Is there an afterlife and if so what is it like? Do we have free will? What is a prophet and why don't they exist anymore?

PB&J (Picture Books & Judaism)

Noemi Hollander

"The Giving Tree" is about more than a tree. Does "The Runaway Bunny" have a Jewish mother? Come visit your old favorite kids' books and see the Jewish values buried inside.

Jewish Dolls, Puppets and Soft Sculpture

Bunny Pearlman

Using your favorite characters from Jewish history or the Bible, we will explore methods of doll and puppet-making from stocking dolls to marionettes.



8 – 12 GRADERS

CLASSES: 10TH – 12TH GRADE **ELECTIVES: THIRD HOUR**

Abraham's Vision–Unity Program: Inter-Group Muslim and Jewish Conflict Transformation Program

Staff from Abraham's Vision

11:40 a.m. – 1 p.m.

The class includes teacher-led discussions on issues related to Islam, Judaism, and Muslim-Jewish relations; Jewish and Muslim guest speakers; inter-school meetings with students from our Islamic partner school; and field trips. To download the separate application for this class go to www.abrahamsvision.org. This class is a full year commitment.

Strong the Force Is: Jewish Jedi Training and Meditation

Day Schildkret

Have you ever watched Star Wars and wished you could go through Jedi training yourself? In these times of spiritual searching, many people find themselves drawn to the life the Jedis model. They are taught to quiet their minds and practice listening and feeling the "force" or "ruach" flowing through them. The Jedis use psychic abilities, they "feel" and "sense" things around

them and are always calm and fearless. But are the Jews? In this class, we will experience Jedi and Jewish Mystic training that will teach us that the Force is one with everything. Through experiential training, insightful movies and yoda-esque books, we will learn that you can train yourself to be at one again with the force. May the force be with you.



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10TH Grade–Keshet Aleph

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11TH – 12TH Grade Keshet Bet

Devra C. Aarons

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OPEN TO ALL 8-12 GRADERS

OTHER CLASSES

Midweek Tanach and Talmud Class

Team taught by Zvi Septimus and David Henkin

There will be one theme that David will follow through the Tanach and Zvi will explore in rabbinic / Talmudic literature.

Thursdays, 4:15 – 6:15 p.m., beginning September 11

Class meets at Congregation Beth Israel, 1630 Bancroft Way, Berkeley

Mystical Visions of God

Rabbi Menachem Creditor

Tuesdays, 6:15 – 7:15 p.m., beginning October 28

Class meets at Congregation Netivot Shalom, 1316 University Avenue, Berkeley

Coming Next Semester...

Rabbis Mark Bloom of Congregation Beth Abraham and Yoel Kahn of Congregation Beth El will meet with their synagogues' tenth graders on Sunday morning to prepare for Confirmation.



“**M**idrasha is truly one of the greatest organizations around. It is not often that so many people who solely share the trait of being Jewish can come together and become so close. School friends are great but at Midrasha, my peers—and staff—are so different. There is a bond that is there and will always be there with these people that I am with today. This is a place where I always feel at home.”

Joe Miller, Class of 2008

MIDRASHA RETREATS

Midrasha Retreats are a Place to...

- Hang-out, pray, dance, sing, talk, debate, star-gaze and play Ultimate Frisbee.
- Be in a safe place for teens to explore, experience and experiment with different ways of being Jewish while discussing the tough questions teens face today.
- Celebrate Shabbat and feel the warmth of the Havdalah circle.
- Leave the hassles and the pressures of daily life behind.
- Meet Jewish students from the Midrashot in Berkeley, Oakland, Contra Costa and Tri-Valley/Tri-Cities.



PROGRAM

10TH -12TH Grade = Keshet “Connection”

9TH Grade = Etgar “Challenge”

8TH Grade = Gesharim “Building Bridges”

*Rites of Passage-optional backpacking trip
Day Trip into San Francisco
Gesharim Retreat at Camp Newman

RETREAT DATES

November 21 – 23
January 30 – February 1
April 3 – 5

November 7 – 9
February 20 – 22
May 15 – 17

October 3 – 5 OR October 24 – 26
December 7
May 15 – 17

*Rites of Passage: 8TH grade Wilderness Weekend:

Spend Shabbat in the wilderness with a small group of 8TH graders backpacking, cooking over an open fire, sleeping under the stars, and surrounded by trees. Sign up for “ROP” whether you are first-time or hard-core camper and come home with a dozen new friends.

JOURNEY WITH OTHER TEENS

Let's Go Israel! Summer Israel Tour...

is the ultimate Jewish adventure. Joining with teens from across the Bay Area, travel to Israel to walk in the footsteps of our ancestors. Visit historical sites right out of the Bible while discovering the excitement of modern Israel. From floating in the Dead Sea, to shopping at open-air markets, to rappelling in the Judean Hills, to praying at the Western Wall, Let's Go Israel is a month packed with learning, discovery, and fun. Open to 10TH & 11TH graders.

Panim el Panim Leadership Seminar:

Each spring, Midrasha brings a delegation to Washington, D.C. Students learn about the legislative process and the issues that face our

country today. Joining other Jewish teens from across the country we tour the nation's capital, visiting historic sites, monuments and the U.S. Holocaust Museum. Panim brings Jewish values into action when we lobby members of Congress on behalf of the environment, social justice and Israel. Open to 11TH and 12TH graders.

Shalhevet ("flame" in Hebrew)...

is a once-in-a-lifetime experiential learning opportunity. Students journey through Jewish history during a 10-week spring semester class and a two-week trip to Poland and Israel. Explore the life of pre-WWII Polish Jewry, the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel by joining this program. Open to 10TH & 11TH graders.

For information on these programs, contact the Jewish Community Federation at 510.839.2900.

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

"I have made some of my closest friends and experienced many different forms of Judaism. I have learned to accept other traditions and services, while maintaining my own. There are experiences I've had at Midrasha that I might not have been open to elsewhere."

Benjamin Bovarnick, Class of 2008



Hadracha: 11TH /12TH Grade Leadership

Program participants receive leadership training through a series of workshops and retreats. Working closely with CJLL retreat staff, you will put leadership skills into action by planning and running activities on 9TH grade Etgar retreats.

Midrasha in Berkeley:

Students give a teen voice to decision-making at Midrasha by serving as members of the Board of Directors, the Marketing Committee and by organizing the Homeless Dinner Program.

Job Bank

Optional inclusion on this list gives students opportunities for both paid employment and community service.

Recommendations and References

Midrasha's director writes college recommendations for all enrolled seniors and provides job references for both current students and alumni.

TIKKUN OLAM | MAKE A DIFFERENCE

“We are a people who for thousands of years have helped those in need and, as a Jew, it is my duty to continue to help those in need...”

Mayan Stanton,
Class of 2008

Homeless Dinners

Organized and administered entirely by Midrasha students, families are responsible for cooking three dinners a month at the Berkeley Men's Shelter.



Sandwiches at Break

Each week Midrasha students prepare sandwiches during break, which are donated to a local shelter.

SPARK: Heartaction—Connecting with our Elders

Midrasha offers a class which connects teens with the elderly. You have the opportunity to be an ongoing part of the lives of residents of the Jewish Home in San Francisco.

Abraham's Vision—Unity Program

Inter-Group Muslim and Jewish Conflict Transformation Program combines class learning, meetings with students from an Islamic school and field trips to create an environment where students learn with and from the “other.”

Opportunities to fulfill your community service requirements

whether it's cooking at a shelter, tutoring reading or providing holiday gifts for the needy, Midrasha provides various ways to fulfill community service obligations from your secular school.

MEET THE FACULTY



DEVRA C. AARONS

is a story-teller, healer, yogi, stargazer and educator. She has a B.A. in Theatre, but has also dabbled in ritual theory, archeology and massage therapy and also happens to be the Director at Contra Costa Midrasha.



RONI ALPERIN

is a playwright and director, a sabra and holds a B.A. from Tel Aviv University in Theatre Arts. He is studying in the M.A. program in Drama Therapy at California Institute of Integral Studies.



RABBI MENACHEM CREDITOR

is a Yankees fan, is addicted to caramel lattes and is rabbi of Congregation Netivot Shalom.



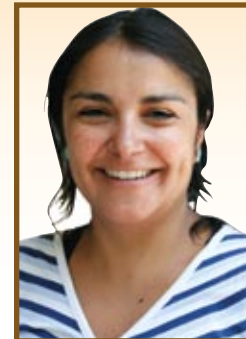
ERICA CROWELL

is a clinical social worker with her M.S.W. from U.C. Berkeley and has taught at Midrasha for 17 years. Her proudest accomplishment is being Rosa's mom.



DAVID HENKIN

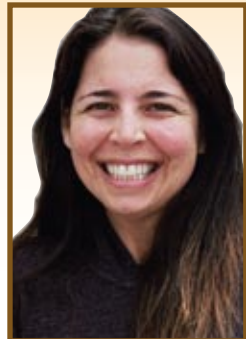
is a Professor of History at U.C. Berkeley and co-founder of the Mission Minyan. He has been teaching at Midrasha longer than anyone else—19 years.



NOEMI HOLLANDER

graduated from Midrasha a long time ago. She has spent the last decade (or so) working in publishing and raising Celie Luna who, at press time, is anticipating the birth of a sibling.

MEET THE FACULTY



SACHA J. KOPIN has been working in the Midrasha system, both as a teacher and a director, for 16 years. She loves to dress up, dance and the tastiest thing she does is work with her husband, who is a caterer.



ANNA MARTIN, a Midrasha alumna, holds a B.A. in Comparative Literature from Barnard College and a teaching credential from San Jose State University. She likes teaching so much that she also teaches 7TH graders in public school (and really likes it) and staffed this summer's Let's Go Israel! trip.



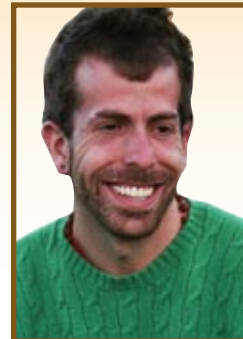
GREG NEWMARK is a graduate student at U.C. Berkeley in City and Regional Planning. He lived in Israel for many years where he worked on the as yet un-built Tel Aviv subway.



BUNNY PEARLMAN has a B.F.A. from the University of Florida, and an M.F.A. from U.S.C. She is an artist and a teacher of Hebrew and Judaic studies and for many years ran an art gallery.



MUNI SCHWEIG has a B.A. from U.C. Berkeley in Comparative Literature and an M.A. from the Hebrew University in Jewish Civilization. He is the father of Yonim, Nava, Raanan and Daniel.



DAY SCHILDKRET is happy. He has accomplished some things in his tenure of life (directed on Broadway, produced television, worked in politics, and studied Native American, Shamanic and Kabbalistic mysticism). Having recently moved from Manhattan, Day is the Director of Tri Valley/Tri Cities Midrasha.



ZVI SEPTIMUS has a B.A. in Near Eastern Studies from U.C. Berkeley and is a Ph.D. student at U.C. Berkeley in Talmud. He makes artwork out of baseball cards from the 80's during his spare time.



DESMID LYON [& granddaughter **Angelina**] Midrasha's Assistant Director, has a B.A. in Near Eastern Studies and an M.S.W. from U.C. Berkeley. She begins her eleventh year at Midrasha and is the parent of five, four of whom are Midrasha graduates.



DIANE BERNBAUM begins her twenty-eighth year as director of Midrasha. She still loves her job.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

MIDRASHA 2008 – 2009 SCHOOL YEAR!

Monday, August 25, 7:30 p.m.	Orientation for 8 TH Graders & New Families
September 7	First Day of Midrasha
November 2	Parent/Student Study Brunch
November 30	NO SCHOOL – Thanksgiving
December 21, 28, January 4	NO SCHOOL – Winter Break
February 15	NO SCHOOL – Presidents' Weekend
April 5, 12	NO SCHOOL – Spring Break.
May 17	Last Day of Class and Graduation



“Midrasha’s expansive network of Jewish roots and spiritual branches has allowed me to search and search to find my own comfortable flower from which to emerge.”

Ariel Platt, Class of 2008



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Midrasha is sponsored by the congregations of Aquarian Minyan, Beth Abraham, Beth El, Beth Hillel, Beth Israel, Beth Jacob, B'nai Israel, Kehilla Community Synagogue, Netivot Shalom, and Sha'ar Zahav in partnership with the CJLL, Federation's Center for Jewish Living and Learning. The CJLL provides curricular services, professional development for Midrasha staff, leadership development for Midrasha students and coordination between the four Midrasha campuses. The CJLL operates Midrasha retreats and excursions and provides financial aid. Midrasha in Berkeley is a beneficiary of the Jewish Community Federation and Foundation of the Greater East Bay.

Contact the Center for Jewish Living and Learning for questions regarding Midrasha retreats and excursions, Hadracha, Panim el Panim and Let's Go Israel, 510 839-2900.

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EAST BAY JEWISH COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

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“I have come to learn that figuring out what I believe in and what I agree with in a Jewish context is not about coming up with definitive answers, but is about being thoughtful and educated about the process of asking questions. Learning to ask broader questions about identity and the world we live in, is a skill I have certainly been able to apply to my life as a whole.”

Alison Fitch, Class of 2008

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