

Slide 1



Most Sunday mornings when my two-year-old is securely strapped into his high chair, we get out the grape juice and the candle and the besamim and make havdallah. He loves it. He goes nuts when he sees the kiddush cup come down; he knows it will be filled with yummy grape juice. It's a great way to start the day and mark the new week AND it is a very different experience than the few weeks a year when havdallah happens while he is still awake on Saturday night.

The house is quieter than normal. There's no music on. No electronic toys. No family members shouting over facetime as if their voice has to travel all the way from Michigan to New York by itself.. Just us. Playing and laughing and maybe even one parent still napping (that definitely doesn't happen during the week) The apartment has been growing steadily dimmer, but its been so gradual that until we whisper the bracha and light the candle we don't even realize that its dark.

Slide 2



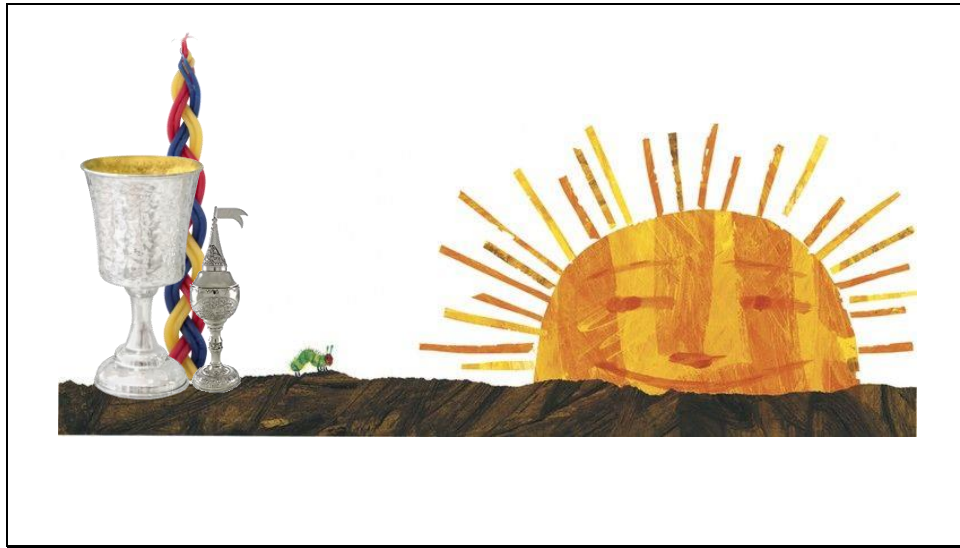
In those moments Honi can't even see the kiddush cup or the grape juice in it. His excitement is inextricably bound up in the majesty of the moment and the power of the change – of the brand-new darkness without and the brand new light within.

Normally the end of the Hebrew school year is perfectly in sync with the way the rest of their lives are changing. School is over. Summer camp or certain sports just about to begin, and we all know that when we meet again in the fall, the kids will be in new grades, sometimes even new schools. All of which signify transition in sync with each other and with their progression through

But this year, for most of us, We – all together – kids parents teachers the world – all transitioned from a world we knew, to something we had never dreamed of. And so as I reflect back on the past few weeks – I realize that the biggest transition of the year has already happened, but that like our Sunday morning kiddush

So I'd like to share a few ways that we've already marked the transitions and then I'll share some of what we're thinking about next...

Slide 3



How can we bring sweetness to a moment when everything has already changed?  
How can I support the growth that is already happening?

Slide 4

## WONDERS?

- What do I do when I see my mom cry?
- Why does your family allow you to eat takeout food from restaurants and my family doesn't?
- Will my family be safe?
  
- Would we have done this activity if we were still in school?

Transitions:  
Keeping a semblance of routine  
Signs and Wonders – the pedagogy of difference  
Comic book

Slide 5

## SIGNS

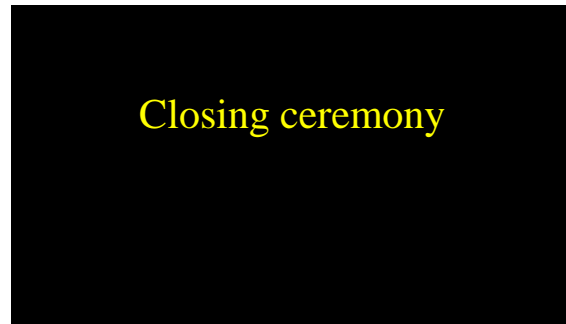
- Now I really know how to wash my hands. I'll always be safer even after the pandemic.
- We used to have dinner as a family maybe once or twice a week. Now we eat together every night.
- None of our family lives in New York, so usually we have Passover with some friends. This year we had a zoom seder and got to be with our whole family for the first time – from three different continents!
- I'm working harder in school than before, but I think I'm learning more

Slide 6

## NEXT QUESTIONS

- What comes after the school year?
- What services/programs can we offer as a shul/learning community?
- What are ways we can partner with others: camps, youth organizations, synagogues, etc.?
- Do the students and parents have other needs that aren't being addressed by what's listed above?

Slide 7



Slide 8



This poster was hanging in our classroom all year – with a challenge: I would buy any Jewish book (value \$50 or less) for anyone who either translated it or could tell me what the source is. But in addition to hopefully getting them excited about extracurricular Hebrew homework, I was really revealing my own kavanah as a teacher. On the last class I will reveal the translation of this poster.

[Maimonides Mishneh Torah, Laws of Torah Study 5:12-13, courtesy Sefaria](#) (with English translation)



Also at the beginning of the year, we began learning about each student's Jewish/Hebrew Name. I compiled a list of sources from the Tanakh for each name, which I hadn't given to them.

Clip from "Fiddler on the Roof"

Then I'll teach about the blessing of the "children" that happens on Friday nights when we celebrate all the work we have completed over the week. Each student will share one way they feel like they have grown (made their "name shine" over the year) and a secret-buddy (I will have assigned these the week before hand) will then: say one way that student has been a blessing to them and give that student a bracha for the summer.

I'll record the blessings and add them to the sheet of name-sources I've compiled for each of them (to which I'll add my own blessings). These will be sent to them after class.

When the blessing circle has ended, we'll each light a candle (or turn on a flashlight or light up toy!). Then, we'll all say the blessing together: Y'simchem c... (and insert all their Hebrew names) and the birkat Cohanim. And we'll wave so long with the instruction to leave the meeting before putting out the light so that we'll always have the image of our lights lit up together. Ill send a screen grab (if all the parents agree ahead of time) of the zoom screen with all their faces and candles with their name/blessing sheet.

## THANK YOU!

### Credits:

- Slide 3: I edited a screen grab of “The Very Hungry Caterpillar” by Eric Carle with images of Judaica for sale on Amazon
- Slide 8: text: [Maimonides Mishneh Torah, Laws of Torah Study 5:12-13, courtesy Sefaria](#)
- Slide 8: bonfire image courtesy: <https://unsplash.com/s/photos/bonfire>
- Slide 9: image is a screen grab of a scene from “Fiddler on the Roof” (N. Jewison, director. 1971)

*And thanks to everyone at CSAIR, the Jewish Education Project, and my best friends (pictured; slide 2) for all your support and inspiration!*

*Clickable links below...*

### Thank You Credits (added after the presentation):

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