

# Placement Kit

A Guide for  
the Educator



## WHEN YOU ARE SEARCHING FOR A POSITION

The office of the Association of Reform Jewish Educators serves the world of Reform Jewish education in many ways. One of its primary roles is to provide a Placement Service for both its professional members and for the educational institutions of the Reform Movement. The ARJE oversees and facilitates the placement process, serving both educators and searching institutions. The purpose of this Placement Kit is to provide sample guidelines and direction for both parties throughout this process. Although its Executive Director is available for consultation and guidance, the ARJE Office is in no way involved in making decisions about hiring an educator or accepting a professional position.

The ARJE serves a variety of institutions: congregational schools, early childhood education centers, day schools, camp and youth programs, HUC-JIR, the URJ, and others. Its membership includes educators with a variety of experiences. Some are new to Jewish education, having recently completed their professional training or having recently entered the field. Others have already been working in Jewish education and are making a professional move through the ARJE placement process. The goal of any placement process is to find the educator best suited for the specific position. There is no “perfect” position for all applicants and there is no applicant who is “perfect” for every position. Through the placement process, applicants and institutions get to know one another in order to find a “match” that will be fulfilling and rewarding for all concerned.

The applicant’s goal is to communicate effectively with a Search Committee both in written form and in direct contact. This kit offers guidance and guidelines for the applicant in preparing the written materials necessary at this time, in addition to providing information regarding the other aspects of the job search process.

The process of searching for a new position in the field can be exciting and exhilarating as well as challenging and frustrating. It gives the educator an opportunity to evaluate his/her professional goals and strengths, and to consider how s/he can grow and develop as a professional. It also requires patience and composure throughout the process. The ARJE has prepared this Placement Kit to provide information and guidelines to assist applicants throughout the process, and it is our hope that you will find it helpful in your search for a new and exciting position.

The ARJE Executive Director is available at all times to assist ARJE members in the placement process, and members are encouraged to consult with the ARJE Office as necessary and desired. Please do not hesitate to be in touch with the ARJE Office if we can be of assistance in this endeavor.

## THE ARJE PLACEMENT LIST

The ARJE is able to serve as a clearinghouse both for positions that are open in congregations and institutions affiliated with the Reform Movement, and for educators who would like to fill these positions; only congregations / institutions and ARJE members who are in good standing may utilize The ARJE's placement service. In order to utilize The ARJE's placement service, a member must be current in dues.

When an institution first contacts The ARJE (and the position is public knowledge), the position is added to the "Awaiting Application" section of our placement list. From the time the packet of materials is received, an institution has one month to return the completed Educator Search application. If the completed application is not returned within this time, then the institution is placed in the "Positions Withdrawn" section of the ARJE placement list until the completed application is received by the ARJE Office.

After receipt of the completed Educator Search application, the congregation's/institution's listing is moved into the "active" section of the ARJE placement list. In this section of the list, a bit of demographic information is included in a congregation's/institution's entry: salary (range), congregation/institution size, school size, and grades that the job entails.

Please note that a position is not officially available and ARJE members may not apply for a position (i.e., have their materials forwarded to the congregation/institution) while it is in the "Awaiting Applications" section of the Placement List. It is only AFTER a congregation/institution has returned its completed Educator Search application that materials from an interested applicant may be forwarded to an congregation/institution.

The ARJE placement list is posted on the ARJE's website in the section open only to ARJE members, and is updated at least once a week; it is more frequently updated during the busy "placement season" (December/January through April/May).

When an ARJE member who is searching for a position is interested in applying for a position, s/he requests (usually via telephone or e-mail) that his / her materials be sent via e-mail to a searching institution or congregation. At the same time an applicant's materials are e-mailed to the institution/congregation, the institution's/congregation's materials (i.e., the completed Educator Search application—see below) are e-mailed to the applicant.

The process is then an open one—the institution/congregation is free (and urged) to contact an applicant to let him/her know that is has received his/her materials, and will eventually be in touch. At the same time, the applicant is also free to contact the congregation/institution.

## THE JOB SEARCH PROCESS

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### GENERAL GUIDELINES

When you determine that you would like to search for a position, we ask that you compose a traditional résumé; try to keep it to 2 pages, and certainly not more than 3; see below for more detailed guidelines. In addition, we ask you to write a Personal Statement, the guidelines for which are included below.

When you're satisfied with the résumé and the Personal Statement, please e-mail it as a file attachment in the word processor of your choice (Microsoft Word or WordPerfect); using Adobe Acrobat software, the ARJE office will create a pdf version of your materials, and these will be e-mailed to prospective employers at your request. You, of course, will be cc'd when the materials are e-mailed, and will also receive a confirmation e-mail with the congregation's application. The ARJE Executive Director is available for consultation regarding both pieces.

### INFORMING YOUR CURRENT CONGREGATION/INSTITUTION

When your materials are forwarded to a prospective employer, it is a good idea to inform at least one lay or professional leader in your congregation/institution. These situations are delicate, and it is reasonable to want to keep your interest in a possible new position as confidential as possible until it becomes more "serious." Congregations are encouraged to keep names of prospective candidates for a position confidential until an actual interview takes place. It is clear, however, that this is not always the case. In fact, it has been the experience of the ARJE Office that once the materials of an applicant have been sent, news of this frequently leaks out beyond the confines of the Search Committee. This can adversely affect the educator's relationship with a current employer, and can compromise an otherwise solid relationship.

Ideally, therefore, you should be the one who is in control of the flow of information, and it is in your best interest to inform at least one senior lay or professional leader in your current congregation/institution. Obviously, this should be someone with whom you have a positive working relationship, and who will keep your early interest in the new position confidential.

After you have had a formal interview (either via telephone, video or in person), you should inform at least one officer of your current institution/congregation and keep that individual informed regarding the process as it unfolds.

### RÉSUMÉ

Your résumé (also known as a curriculum vitae) is the first information a potential employer will read about you. Often the résumé will determine who will be invited to interview for a position. Be advised that there are many resources readily available to you to help compose your résumé. Several such resources are listed below. Samples of résumés are also included in the Appendix. This kit is designed to include broad guidelines for you in the process of compiling your résumé.

The word résumé , comes from the French word, “résumer,” which means “to summarize.” The specific purpose of a résumé is to summarize your experience, knowledge, skills and accomplishments in a succinct and attractive way. Your résumé should be a “mini-statement” about yourself. Ideally, the hiring institution will begin to gain a sense of who you are as a person and potential educator after reading your résumé. The résumé should tell the institution that you have valuable experience and skills in the field of Jewish education. Your goal should be to say what you mean in clear and concise language that will encourage a committee to want to meet you in person.

#### Essential Categories to Include

- Education: degrees and credentials
- Academic awards or significant papers
- Professional experience (with a brief description of the work)
- Personal interests/hobbies (this is optional)
- References: You may include these right in the résumé that you submit to prospective employers, or you can list them on a separate page that is forwarded later

#### Overall Appearance

- Length: approximately two or three typed pages, and not more than four pages
- Language: clear and grammatically correct
- Layout: legible and easy to read

#### Resources

A tremendous number of resources to guide you in creating your résumé are available, including books, computer programs, and the Internet.

##### Books

Résumés for Dummies: Fourth Edition, by Joyce Lain Kennedy, For Dummies Publishing, 2002

Résumé Magic: Trade Secrets of a Professional Résumé Writer by Susan Whitcomb, Jist Works Publishing, 2003

Expert Résumés for Teachers and Educators, by Wendy Enelow and Louise Kursmark, Jist Works Publishing, 2001

##### Computers

Most popular word processing programs such as MS Word and WordPerfect provide templates for résumés. Consult your program's “Help” feature for information on how to utilize them. In addition, there are also specific computer programs designed to help you compose your résumé.

##### Internet

For those with access to the Internet, a search with the word “Résumé” will provide many sites of interest.

#### The ARJE Office

The ARJE's Executive Director is also available for help with composing your résumé.

## THE PERSONAL STATEMENT

The purpose of the Personal Statement is to provide members of a Search Committee with a fuller picture of you than a listing of items can provide on the résumé. The task of the Search Committee is to get a sense of who you are as a professional educator, a person and a Jew. This is an opportunity for you to convey what is important to you and about what you are passionate and enthusiastic.

The Personal Statement should be two to three typed pages. Consider including three of four of the following items. You may choose to incorporate them into a single essay or a series of shorter essays.

- What personal experience motivated you to enter the field of Jewish education ?
- Who is your Jewish “hero ?”
- Describe a significant professional experience you have had.
- Explain your philosophy of education.
- What might you want to change about the Jewish experiences you have had in the past ?
- Select a text or verse from Jewish tradition that informs your professional role and explain its significance to you.
- Discuss one of the challenges facing Reform Jewish education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- Explain your philosophy of Judaism.
- Discuss some of your interests outside of your professional commitments.

## SAMPLE MATERIALS

Be prepared to send samples of materials you have created to the institution at their request during the application process. **Do NOT send these directly to the ARJE Office.**

Include items such as fliers for programs you have developed, synagogue bulletin articles or school newsletters, handbooks and guides you have created, samples of letters you have written in an educational position, curricular guidelines and programs, etc.

## REFERENCES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Be prepared to submit references and/or letters of recommendation to the Search Committee during the application process. **Do NOT send these directly to the ARJE Office.** As stated above, you should include them on a separate page that you will forward later on.

You should list a minimum of three references, and not more than six. Ideally, your references should represent a broad range of stakeholder groups with whom you have worked or had contact. Examples of categories of references include lay leaders, staff colleagues (e.g., the rabbi, cantor, etc.), professors who were your teachers, and school faculty.

**Prospective employers do indeed call references.** It is important that you ask your choices for references if they feel that they can give you a positive recommendation. Indeed, it is critical, therefore, that you inform your references that they have been listed as such on your résumé. You do not want your references to be surprised when they receive a call from someone representing an institution to which your materials have been forwarded.

## THE APPLICATION/INTERVIEW PROCESS

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Once your materials have been forwarded to a prospective employer, the search process may take several months. The “placement season” usually begins after the High Holidays, and the busiest time for placement takes place during the winter and spring. It is most important for both the institution and the applicant to remain focused and patient during the process to ensure a positive outcome for all involved. Please refer to the Educator Search Check List / Timeline for Institution in Appendix Two of this kit to provide an overview of the timetable.

### GUIDELINES ABOUT THE INTERVIEW

Once an institution shows interest in a candidate, a series of interviews will commence. Both the educator and the institution should be aware of legal and appropriate questions for interviews. We suggest that the educator consult with an attorney about how to respond to questions that may seem inappropriate. Often the first interview is a telephone or a video (e.g., Skype, Oovoo, FaceTime) interview where the members of the Search Committee from the institution will use a speakerphone or conference call or video conferencing service to interview a candidate. As in an in-person interview, a telephone or video interview should be treated seriously by all parties. The candidate should be prepared to answer and ask questions and to act in a professional manner during the conversation.

The interview is an opportunity for mutual inquiry. It is proper for all parties involved to ask questions and discuss various issues regarding the position. You will be asked about your experience, your personal and professional skills and your interest in the position. You may be asked why you are leaving your current position. Be prepared to explain why you are interested in a position.

You should be prepared to ask members of the Search Committee about their institution and about their expectations of a new educator. When asking or answering questions, it is to your benefit to be firm and dynamic. While it is appropriate to express concerns about the position or the community, you certainly want to leave the committee with a positive impression. Questions about compensation are best discussed after an initial interview, when the institution/congregation has expressed interest in hiring you.

## SUGGESTED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### To the Search Committee

- Describe the current programs offered for students of all ages, from early childhood through high school.
- What aspect of the current educational program is a high priority for the institution for the next few years, and in the long term ?
- Does the institution/congregation offer programs for individuals with special needs ?
- Describe the current faculty.
- How does the institution/congregation interact with the local community ?
- How is the School Office organized ? Is there support staff? Computer and copying capabilities ?
- What is the educational program's annual budget? How is the school funded? Who is responsible for the collection of school fees and the supervision of school funds ?
- What are the expectations for the role of the educator in synagogue life ?
- What is your vision of education in the institution for the next five years ?

### To the Rabbi/Cantor/Other Professional Staff

- How long have you been with the institution/congregation ?
- How are you currently involved in the institution's education programs ?
- How do you envision working with the new educator ?
- Are you involved in any specific activities such as: holiday programming, Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation, music classes, visits with students ?
- Are there aspects of the current education programming that are a particular priority for you ?
- Describe the ritual observance of the congregation/institution.
- What are your expectations of the role of the educator ?
- (To be asked of the Administrator/Executive Director): Do you supervise administrative areas of the school? If so, which areas (support staff, budget, facility usage, purchasing) ?



## NEGOTIATIONS: COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

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It is appropriate to begin discussing compensation and benefits after the institution/congregation has expressed interest in hiring an applicant. An applicant may wish to consider the following topics of negotiation in advance in order to prioritize and evaluate his/her expectations. As in all phases of the placement process, the ARJE Office is available for assistance in this area, too. Terms of negotiations should be included in a written contract or letter of agreement that is prepared and signed by both parties when an agreement has been reached. **There should be a written job description for the position you are considering, and you should see this job description before signing a contract or letter of agreement.**

Ideally, the contract should incorporate the spirit and language of the Guidelines for Educator-Congregational Relationships ("The Blue Book") that was adopted and recommended by the URJ, the CCAR, and NATE in 1988. The Blue Book may be accessed by navigating your browser to [http://www.natenet.org/\\_kd/Items/actions.cfm?action=Show&item\\_id=1003&destination=ShowItem](http://www.natenet.org/_kd/Items/actions.cfm?action=Show&item_id=1003&destination=ShowItem)

*The contract or letter of agreement should cover the following items:*

- Salary
- Length of Contract
- Pension Contribution
- Travel Allowance
- Moving Expenses
- Professional Dues
- Professional Development Expenses
- Time away for Professional Conferences
- Time away at summer camp
- Vacation Time
- Sabbatical
- Medical Insurance
- Dental Insurance
- Vision Insurance
- Disability Insurance
- Maternal/Paternal/Family Leave
- Discretionary Fund
- Complimentary Synagogue Membership/Early Childhood/Religious School Fees
- Parsonage (if applicable)
- Magazine and Professional Journal Subscriptions
- Support staff (secretarial, administrative assistant)
- Book allowance

Of course, every institution is different, and not all of the above items will be included in every agreement. You are encouraged to use your own discretion when negotiating a contract. For more information regarding the contract or letter or agreement, applicants are encouraged to consult the Sample Contract for Educators, a The ARJE publication that is available both from the ARJE Office in hard copy and via the ARJE website ([http://www.natenet.org/\\_kd/Items/actions.cfm?action=Show&item\\_id=2064&destination=ShowItem](http://www.natenet.org/_kd/Items/actions.cfm?action=Show&item_id=2064&destination=ShowItem)). **Most importantly, do not sign a contract or letter of agreement without first showing it to an attorney.**

Additionally, the ARJE Executive Director is available for consultation and guidance regarding the negotiating process.

## APPENDIX ONE: Educator Search Checklist/Timeline for Institutions

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Fill in the appropriate dates on this form and check off each item as it is completed.

Event	Date Due	Date Completed (✓)
Institution Contacts the ARJE Office or visits web site for Educator Search Kit		
Institution convenes a Search Committee with chair/s designated as contact-people for the ARJE Office and applicants		
Position is posted on the ARJE Placement List in "Awaiting Applications" section		
Institution completes Educator Search application and returns to the ARJE Office within one month of receiving the packet		
Position is moved into the "active" section of the ARJE placement list		
Educator contacts the ARJE office indicating interest in a position: his/her résumé/personal statement are mailed to congregation/institution, and congregation's/institution's materials are mailed to him/her (usually within two business days)		
<b>Congregation/Institution responds (via e-mail, snail-mail, or telephone) directly to educator, indicating that materials have been received</b>		
If congregation/institution is interested, a time-frame for an initial in-person or telephone interview is arranged		
Institution/congregation maintains ongoing contact with all applicants regarding status (unless there is absolutely no interest)		
Institution/congregation offers the position to an candidate, informing the ARJE Office at the same time		
Position is accepted by the educator		
Contract is written, negotiated and completed (within 3 weeks)		
All other active candidates receive official notification that they are no longer being considered for the position		
The ARJE Office is informed of the successful search		
Announcement of completed search is included in the ARJE placement list		

## APPENDIX TWO: Sample Résumés

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See following pages.

Acknowledgments:

Rabbi Beth Klafter, RJE

ARJE (formerly NATE ) Placement Committee

Melanie Cole Goldberg, RJE, Chairperson

Elizabeth Bloch, RJE

Deena Bloomstone, RJE

Ilana Feitlowitz

Lisa Goldstein, RJE

Lesley Silverstone, RJE

Layout:

Kim Brenden Singer

# Clarice Propnose

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<b>Experience</b>	<b>1997–Present</b>	<b>Temple Teglach</b>	<b>Binkytown, WV</b>
	<b>Director of Education</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Organize and administer educational programs for 340 students grades K-12.</li><li>• Develop school curricula.</li><li>• Supervise faculty of 25.</li><li>• Develop and conduct family education programs.</li><li>• Teach adult education courses.</li><li>• Coordinate and oversee volunteer student teacher corps.</li><li>• Conduct monthly Junior Congregation <i>Shabbat</i> morning services.</li><li>• Advise Sisterhood Rosh Chodesh group.</li></ul>		
	<b>1994–1997</b>	<b>Temple B'nai Laila</b>	<b>Funkyville, NY</b>
	<b>Director of Education</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Administered program for 200 students grades K-12.</li><li>• Supervised faculty of 12.</li><li>• Developed family and adult education programs.</li></ul>		
	<b>1990–1994</b>	<b>Temple Rodef Kesef</b>	<b>Burg Lake, CA</b>
	<b>Education Intern</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assisted and observed rabbi in all aspects of congregational life including services, life cycle rituals, hospital visits and committee meetings.</li><li>• Taught classes and developed curricula for grades 7-12.</li><li>• Advised junior and senior youth groups.</li><li>• Taught adult studies classes.</li></ul>		
	<b>Summer 1989</b>	<b>North American Federation of Temple Youth</b>	<b>Israel</b>
	<b>Teen Tour Leader</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Supervised group of 30 teens on a six week NFTY in Israel tour.</li></ul>		
	<b>1984–1988</b>	<b>Union of American Hebrew Congregations</b>	<b>Chicago</b>
	<b>Regional Youth Director</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Directed NFTY Great Lakes region.</li><li>• Coordinated regional events for high school youth group members of URJ-affiliated congregations.</li><li>• Conducted youth advisor training workshops.</li><li>• Advised local congregations on youth programming and development.</li></ul>		

<b>Education</b>	1988–1991	Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion	
			New York
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M.A.R.E.</li> <li>• Academic Awards: Modern Hebrew, Talmud, Midrash.</li> </ul>	University of Maryland	College Park, MD
	1979–1983		
		Hebrew University	Jerusalem, Israel
	1981–1982		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One Year Program at the School for Overseas Students.</li> </ul>	<i>Kibbutz Chatzerim</i>	Israel
	1979		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Six month Hebrew ulpan work-study program.</li> </ul>		
<b>References</b>	Available upon request.		

# Clarence Prognose

123 Sesame Street  
New York, NY 11111  
212.555.1212

Mypersonal address@aol.com

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**JOB OBJECTIVE:** Position as Director of Education

## Professional Experience

**6<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher** 2002 to Present  
**Temple Our Lady of a Thousand Mitzvahs** Funkyville, NY

- ◆ Establish a course in which the students develop a deeper appreciation of their Judaism through a rigorous selection of quality Jewish nonfiction literature
- ◆ Course concentration focuses on Jewish Heroes (both Modern & Biblical), Jewish Values (Mitzvah), and Jewish Ethics (Covenant).
- ◆ Yearlong class project devoted to “What is a Jewish Hero?”
- ◆ Individual assignments geared to “One Person/Mitzvah can make a difference!”

**Director of Education** 1999 to 2002  
**Temple Shana Toiva** Binkytown, NY

- ◆ Establish appropriate curriculum for each class in grades PreK-10 in both Hebrew and Religious School
- ◆ Review, revise, and assess curriculum to support Reform Judaism guidelines and the needs of the Hebrew and Religious School students
- ◆ Oversee and assess Family Education Program
- ◆ Identify students with special needs and implement appropriate programs with Special Education teacher, classroom teachers, and Rabbi
- ◆ Coordinate Family services with classroom teachers, students, and Rabbi
- ◆ Create and Coordinate new Israel Curriculum for grades 2-9
- ◆ Develop innovative monthly theme programs for grades 3-9 with support of staff, Rabbi, and parents. Facilitate two- hour workshop regarding the Jewish Home, Shabbat, Sukkot, Chanukah, Tu Bshevat, Pesach, Purim Passover, Israel, and Jewish Values.
- ◆ Initiate with staff innovative teaching strategies: Cooperative Learning Groups, Thematic Units, and Multiple Learning Approach
- ◆ Maintain a sensitive and vigilant relationship with our growing interfaith family population
- ◆ Administer staff training in the areas of lesson plans, subject enrichment, and use of resource materials (Internet).
- ◆ Engage in classroom observation and teacher assessment
- ◆ Coordinate educational meetings with parents, teachers, and students
- ◆ Counsel and advise parents and students regarding school policies
- ◆ Develop budget, coordinate textbook procurement, and manage school supply inventory
- ◆ Develop efficient in-house recruitment of teachers and substitutes.
- ◆ Led congregational services in absence of Rabbi

**Assistant Administrator , 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, & 9<sup>th</sup> grade teacher**  
**Temple Shushan**

1988 to 2002  
**Binkytown, NY**

- ◆ Developed new curriculum focusing upon, Mitzvot, Israel and the Middle East, Bible Study, Tikkun Olam, World Religions, Holocaust Study, Immigration & Family Roots, and Jewish Children's Literature
- ◆ Instituted multiple learning activities involving art, music, theatre, and dance in the curriculum
- ◆ Implemented thematic units of study: *Anne Frank*, *Tolerance*, and the *Jewish-African American Experience*.
- ◆ Served as a liaison with local BJE, and CAJE to develop teacher enrichment program
- ◆ Assisted Rabbi in development of monthly family services
- ◆ Served as substitute teacher for *Tefilah* classes (grades 4-7)

## **Education**

**New York University, New York, NY**

1997 to 1999

27 credits in K-6 Elementary Education Graduate Program  
Children's Literature area of concentration  
Kappa Delta Pi National Honor Society

**University of Rochester, Rochester, NY**

1970 to 1972

B.A. in English (School of Education)  
9-12 Provisional New York State Teaching Certification  
9-12 Provisional New York State Teacher of English License

## Related Business Skills

### Sales & Marketing Representative for KB Toys

1981 to Present

- ◆ Twenty plus years of extensive public speaking experience
- ◆ Strong organizational and interpersonal skills
- ◆ Proven ability to develop successful marketing strategies for new business and to maintain core business accounts
- ◆ Resourceful, creative, and successful in solving customer-related issues and concerns
- ◆

### Community Service

- ◆ Past President of Temple Shushan Men's Club 1991 to 1993
- ◆ Member of the Temple Shushan Board of Trustees 1991 to 2000
- ◆ Member of Fund Raising & Membership Committees 1989 to 1999  
Temple Shushan
- ◆ Manager & Coach 1985 to 1998  
Binkytown, NY Soccer, Baseball, and Basketball Leagues

### Personal Interests and Hobbies

Sports, classic jazz, reading, wilderness exploration, cooking with gas

### Professional Affiliations

- ◆ Long-time active member of **BAJES** (Binkytown Association for Jewish Education)
- ◆ Member of **The ARJE** (Association of Reform Jewish Educators)
- ◆ Member of **BATE** (Binkytown Area Temple Educators)

### References

Available upon request