

Note to the teacher:

In teaching Sefer Shemot, we are undertaking a most holy and serious responsibility to accurately and effectively transmit to our students some of the most fundamental ideas about the birth of the Jewish nation, freedom and oppression, *berit* and law, worship and holiness. This book stands contains not only the foundation story of the Jewish nation, but has also inspired millions of people throughout the world and across generations to aspire for freedom, live according to law and morality, and seek out closeness to God. The responsibility and privilege of teaching this material therefore behooves us to think carefully about how to choose what topics, ideas, themes, and sources to cover and how best to bring students towards a deep and enduring understanding of these lessons.

It is therefore best to start at the end: what are our goals for the year? What do we want student to have achieved by the end of the course of study? What are the fundamental enduring questions that will guide our journey? How will we assess that students have indeed reached these goals?

This curriculum will focus on the following enduring questions:

How did Israel become a nation and how does that process inform on what it means to be part of that nation today?

What can we learn from the development, actions, and character of Moshe as the nation's leader, legislator, and greatest prophet? What are the characteristics of a great leader and how can we aspire to greatness?

How does the experience of slavery followed by miraculous redemption and revelation mold the character of the nation? How can adversity or challenges in our own lives become opportunities for growth? Where can we find redemption and the prophetic voice in our time?

What does it mean to live within a *berit*? How can one have a relationship with Hashem? Why do we need laws and institutional religion? What's the relationship between law and morality, and between ritual and inner-motivation?

In terms of learning skills, how does one read and interpret a prophetic text? How do literary techniques such as structure, word counts, repetitions, parallels, intertexts, and metaphor help us better understand the prophetic message?

How do we distinguish between and appreciate the value of *peshat* and *derash*? What tools can help us read and understand the *mefarshim*? How can one text have multiple, sometimes contradictory, meanings?

Assessment should include informal – class discussions, calling on students, responses in in-class assignments, and formal – written assignments, quizzes tests, projects and presentations. While the above enduring questions can be relevant to any level and setting in some form or another, exact methods of assessment will vary according to the style of the teacher and the needs of the students. We will provide suggestions for possible assignments, essay topics, or projects in this curriculum but specifics of how to implement this will be up to the teacher. In general, this guide should not be followed by

rote but only used as a resource where teachers can get ideas and adapt them to their specific goals and needs.

בהצלחה!