

Fellowship: Shir Hadash + Santa Cruz

Source Sheet by Michael Walden

The Spiritual Education Kitchen!

Mindset of a Spiritual Educator

- **Inspiration before Information** - The first step with a learner is connection. The next step is inspiration. Only then can we convey information.
- **Radical hospitality** – We create spaces where every learner feels *seen* and valued.
- **Curiosity over certainty** – Judaism is a religion of questions, not answers. Model *Sakranut* (curiosity) by privileging open inquiry over fixed answers.
- **Authentically model yourself** - you don't need to be a master of the material, but you do need to model your own engagement (curiosity, excitement) with the material.

Today, **you are the chef**—your mission is to cook up a unique spiritual-education *recipe* from a “pantry” of basic concepts in spiritual education.

How it works:

1. **Team-up** in groups of three.
2. **Design** your lesson using the *Recipe Card* (next page).
3. **Browse** *The Pantry* for Ingredients (core concepts), Spices (*midot*/spiritual qualities), and Techniques (methods).
4. **Present** a 2-minute “menu”: name, goal, and key components of your dish.

Do your best to ground your creative choices in whatever learning outcome you are aiming for!

1 • Your Recipe (fill-in template)

Learning Outcome ☺ (*Your desired evidence of learning – write one observable sentence*)

Kavanah / Intention (*Your chosen spiritual “flavor” or deeper why*)

Prep Time	Cook (in-class) Time	Yield (Age/Grade)
_____	_____	_____

Accessibility / Setup Needs (*e.g., quiet space, captioned video, tactile materials*)

Experiential Checklist ☺ (*tick each stage you wish to include*)

☐ Experience ☐ Reflect ☐ Conceptualize ☐ Apply

Core Ingredients (Key concepts)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

(add as needed)

Spices (*Midot* / spiritual qualities)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Cooking Technique (Method / Modality)

Tip: If you want your lesson to really stick and broaden the ‘on-ramps’ for different types of learners, **vary your modalities** – aim for at least two different sensory or learner-strength channels.
(Circle or highlight the primary channels your lesson uses.)

Legend



Visual



**Auditory/
Musical**



**Social/
Interpersonal**



**Nature/
Kinesthetic**



**Reflective/
Intrapersonal**

Utensils / Materials

Cooking Instructions (Step-by-step)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

(add steps as needed)

Plating / Presentation (How the experience concludes or is shared)

Reflection & Assessment ☺ (How will you and the learners know it worked?)

Iterate & Adapt (Optional tips, variations, reflections)

2 • The Pantry

Ingredients (Core Concepts)

Jewish Concepts / Sources

Identity & Relationships

- **B'tzelem Elohim (Image of God)** – *Applying the belief in B'tzelem Elohim means actively recognizing the inherent worth and divine spark within every person.* Internalizing this builds a learner's foundational ability to value themselves and others, enabling authentic connection, empathy, and ethical relationships.
- **Mifgash (Encounter) (Levinas)** – *Recognizing the ethical demand presented by the vulnerability and uniqueness revealed in another person's face.* Every face we encounter can call us to both relationship and responsibility. Nurturing this sensitivity develops the capacity for ethical awareness, challenges self-centeredness and demands a response to the other's inherent dignity.

Wonder & Transcendence

- **Radical Amazement (Heschel)** – *Cultivating radical amazement involves guiding learners to experience awe and wonder at the mystery and grandeur of everyday existence.* Heschel famously said to be a Jew is to be amazed - and every one of the 100 blessings a Jew says each day is an opportunity. Nurturing this develops the capacity to perceive the extraordinary in the ordinary, fostering openness, curiosity, and self-transcendence.
- **Chavruta (Paired Dialectical Study)** – *Structuring learning through dialogue, questioning, and active listening with a partner.* Engaging in chavruta develops the ability to co-create meaning, appreciate diverse perspectives, and build relationships through shared inquiry. Additionally, children who learn in chavruta learn they can respect those they disagree with, learn to concede when they are wrong, and grow stronger by adopting new perspectives.

Inner Growth & Integrity

- **Kavanah (Intention / Directed Heart)** – *Guiding learners to bring mindful presence and focused purpose to actions, learning, or reflection.* In each activity, we hope children can name their intention, and can identify their “why.” Cultivating kavanah strengthens the ability to imbue moments with meaning and engage with focus, transforming routine actions into intentional experiences.

Justice & Action

- **Tikkun Olam (Repairing the World)** – *Framing engaging in Mitzvot (commandments) as a shared responsibility to mend brokenness in the world.* This develops the ability to connect inner values with compassionate outward action, fostering agency and grounding spirituality in justice. For children, it’s important that this idea is linked to outcomes they can perceive.
- **Mussar (Ethical/Spiritual Discipline)** – *Consciously developing specific character traits (midot) through reflection and intentional action.* Introducing Mussar concepts and giving students a vocabulary/framework for their traits and personal growth enhances self-awareness, ethical reflection, and intentional personal growth.
- **Kehillah / Community Building** – *Emphasizing belonging within a supportive, meaning-oriented community.* Fostering *kehillah* strengthens the ability to form secure connections, experience shared identity, and participate in collective spiritual life.
- **Hitbodedut (Personal Reflection/Prayer)** – *Creating dedicated time for quiet inner dialogue, personal reflection, or spontaneous prayer.* This shows up in formal prayer, but can also be in nature, on car rides, etc. Encouraging *hitbodedut* develops mindful introspection and cultivates a personal relationship with the transcendent. Children should know that being alone with their thoughts is a learned skill they can improve at, and doesn’t need to be scary.
- **Shema (Deep Listening)** – *Guiding learners in attentive, empathetic listening that goes beyond merely hearing words or sounds.* Cultivating a

sense of *shema* enhances deep connection with others, empathetic learning, and attunement to subtle inner and outer experiences. We talk about approaching deep listening to a person with the framework ALPS: **Accompany, Listen, Problem-Solve**.

- **Mitzvot (Commandments/Deeds as Practice)** – *Using specific actions, rituals, or good deeds to structure ethical behavior and connection to tradition.* Engaging with mitzvot provides concrete ways to enact values, find holiness in action, and use symbolic practice meaningfully.

Academic / Secular Concepts / Sources

- **“Inner Life” (Parker Palmer)**– *Guiding learners to align their inner values, feelings, and nefesh (soul) with their outer actions and roles.* Nurturing this develops authenticity and integrity, enabling navigation of the world from a place of deeper truth. To do this, we **Listen** to our inner self, **Identify** our values, feelings, and *nefesh* (soul), and **Align** our outer actions.
- **Contemplative Pedagogy** – *Intentionally integrating practices like quiet reflection, mindfulness, and deep listening into learning activities.* This enhances focused attention, self-awareness, and the ability to connect academic learning to personal meaning.
- **Mindfulness (Secular OR Aish Kodesh)** – *Guiding learners to pay focused, non-judgmental attention to present-moment experiences.* Living and being present in the moment strengthens self-regulation and focused attention—crucial capacities for managing inner states and engaging deeply.
- **Ethics of Care (Noddings)** – *Prioritizing the nurturing of relationships through empathy and responsiveness to others' needs.* Fostering an ethic of care in our classrooms and between learners develops deep empathy and compassionate action, building the relational foundation for ethical community.
- **Frankl's Logotherapy / Search for Meaning** – *Highlighting the fundamental human drive to find meaning and purpose, even amidst*

challenges. Even our youngest learners can become aware of a sense of meaning, that awareness that they are part of something greater than themselves. Exploring this develops resilience and narrative identity construction, allowing learners to frame experiences within a larger context.

- **Holistic Education** – *Intentionally educating the whole learner across all dimensions, including the spiritual*. This approach validates and develops the ability to integrate all aspects of being, recognizing spirituality as essential.
- **Freire's Critical Consciousness** – *Creating opportunities to perceive, question, and act upon social and ethical contradictions*. This enhances the ability to connect personal experience with larger systems and empowers spiritually-oriented application of values.
- **Positive Psychology / Character Strengths** – *Actively identifying and cultivating character strengths, virtues, and factors contributing to well-being*. Using strengths builds confidence, resilience, and positive pathways for contribution.
- **Awe Research (Keltner)** – *Intentionally designing experiences (e.g., nature, art, witnessing kindness) that evoke the self-transcendent emotion of awe*. Facilitating awe develops humility, openness, and feelings of connectedness.
- **Flow / Optimal Experience (Csikszentmihalyi)** – *Helping learners find activities where they can be fully immersed, energized, and focused*. This develops deep engagement, intrinsic motivation, and profound satisfaction.

The Spice Rack (Midot & Spiritual Qualities)

- **Anavah (Humility)** – *Recognizing one's limits while valuing others' contributions*. *Anavah* is sometimes described as the ability to know exactly how much space to take up in any given situation. Cultivating humility develops openness to learning and seeing beyond the self. In our classrooms, we might connect this to a 'step up, step down'


approach to speaking.

- **Chesed (Loving-kindness/Empathy)** – *Actively showing compassion and seeking to understand others' feelings.* Labelling actions as *gimilut chassadim* (acts of loving-kindness) helps children recognize it and take the first steps towards intentionally applying *chesed*. Fostering *chesed* builds deep connection and ethical responsiveness.
- **Savlanut (Patience/Forbearance)** – *Enduring challenges calmly and giving space to others and processes.* Developing patience enhances resilience and thoughtful, less-reactive interactions. Letting a learner know that their *savlanut* is a skill that is valued in itself (and not, as it is usually presented to them, as being a means to some other end) helps them recognize and develop it on their own.
- **Hoda'ah (Gratitude)** – *Actively appreciating blessings, big and small.* The word Jew, in Hebrew, comes etymologically from *Hoda'ah*, gratitude. To be a Jew is to be thankful. Helping children cultivate gratitude develops recognition of goodness, fosters contentment, and shifts perspective positively.
- **Sakranut (Curiosity)** – *A genuine desire to explore, question, and understand the world.* The highest intellectual goal in Judaism is not becoming a prophet, or rabbi - it is becoming a *talmid chacham* - a wise learner. The Jewish student who succeeds is not the smartest, but the most curious. Nurturing curiosity enhances discovery, lifelong learning, and engagement with complexity.
- **Emet (Truth/Authenticity)** – *Acting with integrity, genuineness, and alignment between inner values and outward behavior.* Fostering authenticity builds trust and living from inner truth.
 - **Zerizut (Enthusiasm/Alacrity)** – *Bringing positive energy and wholehearted engagement to tasks or interactions.* A spiritual teacher must model their own excitement, their own relationship to the material they teach, in order to inspire. Cultivating enthusiasm enhances joyful participation and motivation.


Cooking Techniques (Teaching Methods)

Legend










 Visual

 Nature/Kinesthetic

 Auditory/Musical

 Reflective/Intrapersonal

 Social/Interpersonal

- **Storytelling**    – Using narratives—personal, traditional, or fictional—to engage emotions and explore complex values. Builds connection with heritage, understanding of diverse perspectives, and personal meaning-making.
- **Reflective Writing / Journaling**  – *Providing structured or free writing time to process experiences and feelings.* Develops self-awareness, consolidates learning, and articulates inner states.
- **Artistic Expression (Visual, Drama, Music, Movement)**    – *Employing non-verbal creative modes to explore themes and express inner states.* Enhances access to emotions, symbolic communication, and diverse learning styles.
- **Dialogue & Council Practices**   – *Implementing structured conversations that emphasize respectful listening and shared perspectives.* Examples might include: think-pair-share, group discussions, literature circles, or one-word responses. Builds collaborative meaning-making, empathy, and equitable communication.
- **Nature Connection / Outdoor Experience**   – *Facilitating time outdoors for observation, exploration, or quiet reflection.* This connects back to *Hitbodedut* as well. Develops connection with the environment, finding metaphors in nature, and experiencing tranquility.
- **Mindful Movement / Body Awareness**   – *Guiding gentle physical practices (e.g., stretching, mindful walking) to connect mind and body.* Enhances presence, self-regulation through body awareness, and tension release.

- **Music & Singing** 🎵🤝 – *Incorporating songs, chants, or instrumental music to evoke emotion and build community.* Develops non-verbal connection, collective effervescence, and emotional shifts.
- **Questioning Protocols** 🤝💭 – *Using specific structures (e.g., “See-Think-Wonder”) to encourage deeper thinking and curiosity.* Enhances critical inquiry, perspective-taking, and exploration of complexity. Around knowledge for example, we might ask: “what do you know, and how do you know it?” or “What are some things you don’t know here, but that you feel you should know?”
- **Service Learning / Action Projects** 🌳🤝 – *Connecting classroom learning to meaningful community action addressing real-world issues.* Integrates values with ethical action, fosters social responsibility, and enables learning through experience.
- **Ritual Creation** 🎨💭🤝 – *Designing simple, meaningful, repeatable actions to mark moments and focus intention.* Builds effective use of symbolism, creates sacred time/space, and strengthens community bonding.
- **Care Circles** (Structured Compassion Sharing) 🤝💭 – *Inviting participants to speak and listen from the heart, fostering relational warmth, empathy, and communal trust.*

Sample Fusion Recipes (for inspiration)

- **Flow Journaling Sprint (Secular Fusion)** – *Combine Flow / Optimal Experience with Reflective Writing in a timed creative-writing burst, then debrief which conditions sparked flow.*
 - **Hitbodedut Nature Walk (Jewish Practice)** – *Pair Hitbodedut with Nature Connection; learners walk silently, journaling whispers to God, then share one insight in a Care Circle.*
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Exemplar Recipe – “Wonder-Filled Walk”

(Filled-in sample of the Recipe Card to model integration of pantry items)

Learning Outcome **Learners articulate one new example of Radical Amazement found on campus and describe how it connects to B’tzelem Elohim.**

Kavanah / Intention Cultivate awe in everyday surroundings.

Prep Time **Cook Time** 30 min walk + 10 min share
10 min

Accessibility / Setup Choose an accessible, low-noise path; provide notecards & pencils; invite optional photo capture for visual learners.

Experiential Cycle ☒ Experience ☒ Reflect ☒ Conceptualize ☒ Apply

Core Ingredients

- Radical Amazement
- B’tzelem Elohim

Spices

- Sakranut (Curiosity)
- Hoda’ah (Gratitude)

Technique

Nature Connection + Reflective Writing

Utensils / Materials

Notecards, pens, phone cameras (opt.), clipboards

Cooking Instructions

1. Brief framing (2 min): define Radical Amazement & give prompt.
2. Silent campus walk (15 min): notice “micro-wonders”; jot each on card/photo.
3. Pair share (5 min): exchange one finding, link to B’tzelem Elohim.

4. Full circle (10 min): Care Circle share round; facilitator harvests themes on whiteboard.

Plating / Presentation

Group co-creates a “Wonder Wall” collage in the lounge with cards/photos.

Reflection & Assessment

Exit ticket: write one sentence on how noticing wonder today might shape tomorrow’s interactions.

Iterate & Adapt

Variation: sunset stroll with music & journaling; indoor version uses slideshow of close-up nature images.

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