

2019

 **NYU** | BRONFMAN

18x18 FRAMEWORK:

18 Jewish Things a Young Jew Should Know,
Care About, and Be Able to Do by Age 18

SELECTIONS FROM THE JEWISH PAIDEIA PROJECT



Benjamin M. Jacobs, The George Washington University
Barry Chazan, Spertus Institute of Jewish Learning and Leadership

The NYU Applied Research Collective for American Jewry convenes scholars and practitioners, in and beyond the Jewish community, to collaboratively develop recommendations in funding and policy for Jewish foundations and organizations.

Recognizing the dramatic societal, economic, and political changes of the 21st century, ARC seeks to generate a responsive body of literature and cohort of thinkers to enhance Jewish communal life for the coming decades.

Yehuda Sarna, Director

Chelsea Garbell, Research Scholar & Program Manager



The Marcus
Foundation



CHARLES AND LYNN
SCHUSTERMAN
FAMILY FOUNDATION



MAIMONIDES FUND

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors. They do not necessarily reflect the opinions or views of the Applied Research Collective, its members, funders, or Advisory Committee.



SELECTIONS FROM
THE JEWISH PAIDEIA PROJECT

18x18 FRAMEWORK:

**18 Jewish Things a Young Jew Should Know,
Care About, and Be Able to Do by Age 18**

Benjamin M. Jacobs

The George Washington University

Barry Chazan

Spertus Institute of Jewish Learning
and Leadership

INTRODUCTION

Our objective in this project is to reconceptualize the aims and means of developing Jewish knowledge, values, sensibilities, and commitments among the rising generation of American Jewry (ages 5-18). We begin with some of the key existential questions of Jewish education and Jewish life on the American scene, including: How do we foster Jewish life in an open society, and how can education serve this purpose? What initiates Jewish youth on a Jewish educational journey nowadays, and what can keep them on that journey? How can we prepare Jewish children for effective citizenship and participation in an ever-changing American Jewish community and civilization? Jewish education for whom, by whom, where, when, with what, how, and, above all, for what?

We propose 18 dimensions of Jewish life that educational programs for Jewish youth can aspire to in their curriculum planning and outcomes: *The 18x18 Framework: 18 Jewish Things a Young Jew Should Know, Care About, and Be Able to Do by Age 18*. This framework does not purport to determine who the ideal Jew is, nor does adherence to the 18 dimensions guarantee a certain set of educational outcomes. Rather, its purpose is to provide an exemplary platform for planning and supporting effective efforts in Jewish education rooted in the translation of clear visioning into strategic implementation. It also makes a statement about the kinds of qualities we imagine can undergird active and effective participation in a thriving, vibrant American Jewish community in the future.

Participating thoughtfully, consciously, and actively in the Jewish cultural inheritance requires initiation into the major components of Jewish civilization via a Jewish educational apparatus. This apparatus includes diverse educational venues, encompassing schools, camps, community centers, Israel trips, museums, digital media, and more, but also the home, synagogue, and community at large, working independently or in tandem, for the preparation of young Jews as well-rounded members of American Jewish society. How can we prepare the rising generation of Jewish youth for effective adult citizenship and participation in an ever-changing North American Jewish community and civilization?

Answering this question entails, for starters, a **vision of Jewish education** that can be transformed into a clear and concise set of cross-cutting, identifiable, measurable, attainable educational outcomes for Jewish educational venues.

Our vision of Jewish education is to enable Jewish youth, and ultimately Jews of all ages, to understand and appreciate the core ideas, values, and practices of Jewish civilization, so that these ideas, values, and practices may serve as resources in their lives as Jews, Americans, and human beings.

- > **American Jews are part of 21st-century American and world culture, while at the same time they are linked to a rich and vibrant Jewish heritage and community. All Jewish education activities should be concerned with the positive role and place of Jewish civilization in the lives of Jews generally.**
- > **The focus of Jewish education is the growth of the individual as a Jew and as a human being. Jewish civilization thus must be presented as a valuable resource to enrich Jews' lives as human beings. If such education is effective, it will result in a resilient and forceful Jewish community.**
- > **The ideally educated American Jewish youth is rooted in Jewish life, mindful of Jewish heritage, faithful to Jewish ethics, and involved in the progress of Jewish civilization, while also being committed to the responsibilities of democratic citizenship and open to understanding the backgrounds, yearnings, and needs of others.**
- > **This vision is rooted in the belief that Jewish civilization is neither ancillary nor secondary to broader culture, but is rather an important source of guidance and meaning for living in the contemporary world.**

This part provides a framework for the enactment of this vision and these outcomes. The framework concentrates foremost on three major pillars of Jewish life: community, values and beliefs, and civilization. In creating this framework, we started with a Jewish version of the age-old curricular question: What Jewish knowledge is of most worth, and how do learners acquire it?

Our answer takes the form of a list of 18 Jewish things we feel young Jews should know, care about, and be able to do by the age of 18—hence, the **18x18 Framework**. Overall, our conception of Jewish education goes beyond the mere acquisition of factual knowledge, however. Equally important, in our view, are tasks of understanding, evaluating, and relating to Jewish issues for the sake of the individual and the community. The essential elements of Jewish civilization, such as those articulated in this framework, are open to a range of interpretations. Children need to be inducted into skills, values, attitudes, and practices that enable them to make meaning of contemporary Jewish life.

This framework builds on the premise that the purpose of Jewish education is both instruction (the deliberate, formalized process of handing over elements of the culture by educators to learners) and enculturation (initiation into a culture, including its attitudes, practices, and values, in addition to its knowledge and skills). For each of the 18 components of Jewish civilization we identify, we see **five dimensions of development** in the learner that can be planned for, implemented, and measured:

- **KNOWLEDGE** refers to familiarity with core ideas, facts, terms, and chronology that are central to the Jewish experience.
- **SKILLS** refers to the ability to make links and create patterns out of diverse ideas and to apply them to concrete actions.
- **VALUES** are principles or ideals that have come to be understood as lynchpins to Jewish life throughout the ages.
- **ATTITUDES** refers to what implications these understandings and values have for me the individual. How does this aspect of Jewish life affect my life?
- **PRACTICES** refer to actions, behaviors, and deeds that are important to Jewish life and can be performed by youths at appropriate times.

These five learning dimensions together serve as a **curriculum platform**—that is, an idea of what is and a vision of what ought to be in the curriculum. For the purposes of curriculum planning and evaluation, the learning dimensions translate roughly as follows.

Component of Jewish Civilization

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	VALUES	ATTITUDES	PRACTICES
Understanding <i>it</i>	Ability to do <i>it</i>	What <i>it</i> means for the collective (Jewry)	What <i>it</i> means for the individual (Jew)	Using or doing <i>it</i>

18 Jewish Things a Young Jew Should Know, Care About, and Be Able to Do By Age 18

Educated young Jews should have had formative experiences with the following 18 components of Jewish life by the age of 18. They should be able to articulate the ways in which they belong to the Jewish civilization and community, while recognizing that these points of connection will likely evolve, grow, and mature over time.

-
1. Feel part of a chain of Jewish tradition, as both recipients and co-creators
 2. Feel connected to Jews around the world
 3. Have Jewish friends
 4. Engage with Jewish role models and personalities
 5. Participate in the *kehilla* (Jewish community)
 6. Regard Judaism as a relevant source of wisdom for their questions about life and its meaning
 7. Appreciate *tikkun olam* (repairing the world) as a core Jewish value and perform acts of *gemilut chasadim* (giving of loving-kindness)
 8. Care about and connect with Israel
 9. Read and interpret sacred and historical texts and be able to discern Jewish core narratives (stories, sagas, events) and values within them
 10. Recognize the role wrestling with God has played in Jewish life
 11. Open themselves up to divinity through theology, prayer, study, or other spiritual practices
 12. Understand the mutual influence of Jewish and broader culture on each other and on contemporary Jews
 13. Be able to identify critical issues facing American Jewry and be motivated to act on them
 14. Understand the meanings and performance of Jewish *mitzvot*
 15. Participate in various Jewish rituals, customs, holidays, and lifecycle events, and appreciate their history and meaning
 16. Comprehend and utilize Hebrew words and other Jewish terminology
 17. Partake in Jewish culinary traditions
 18. Experience Jewish arts and culture

1

Feel part of a chain of Jewish tradition, as both recipients and co-creators

Jewish life is shaped by the transmission and interpretation of a heritage that is rooted in Torah and a historical tradition that continues to this day. Young Jews should understand and explain core traditions, be able to articulate how these traditions do or do not fit into their lives, and feel empowered to reinterpret and re-fashion these traditions for a better fit in contemporary times.

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	VALUES	ATTITUDES	PRACTICES
Understand core religious, historical, and cultural traditions in Jewish life. What is Jewish tradition, and what comprises tradition: religiously? historically? culturally? How does (or doesn't) it last over time?	Be able to find and evaluate critically various interpretations of core Jewish traditions in religious, historical, and/or artistic sources, with an eye toward how Jews balance tradition and change.	Tradition, in its many forms, helps inspire our personal ties and collective connections to Jewish life.	Feel empowered to reinterpret and re-fashion Jewish tradition for a better fit in contemporary times.	Articulate how Jewish traditions do (or do not) fit into your life in today's world, why, and in what ways they might in the future.

The 18 Explained, with Sample Curriculum Platforms

Feel connected to Jews around the world

Jewish communities often diverge from one another in place, context, lifestyle, and outlook, but they also comprise a larger, all-encompassing community: the Jewish people. Judaism emphasizes the notion of *klal Yisrael*—that all Jews are responsible for one another. This imperative has expressed itself in the ongoing concern of Jews for each other, and for a sense of community, over time and place. Young Jews should develop a sense of belonging to the Jewish people and civilization by appreciating a shared history, religion, culture, language, and/or nation.

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	VALUES	ATTITUDES	PRACTICES
Understand the value of <i>klal Yisrael</i> —that all Jews are responsible for one another—and its relevance to Jewish peoplehood and community today. Cite historical examples of mutual Jewish responsibility on the local (e.g., local community structures) and global (e.g., connection of world Jewish communities) levels.	Be able to connect and communicate with Jews in other communities and other lands through common religious, ethnic, and/or cultural backgrounds, interests, discourses, and practices.	Jews have a collective past (social history of a people and religion), present (diversity and pluralism across the Jewish world), and purpose (shared concerns, covenants, and commitments among Jews the world over).	Develop a sense of belonging to the Jewish peoplehood and civilization by appreciating shared history, religion, culture, language, and/or nation (Israel).	Embark on live or virtual visits to Jewish sites, and engage in face-to-face or digital interactions with Jews unlike ourselves in other communities.

3

Have Jewish friends

Social networks and friendships are important forces in shaping Jewish connectedness. Jewish friends influence each other in myriad ways, including choices about participation in certain programs or experiences (e.g., summer camp, educational travel, choice of college). Living a Jewish life is enhanced by strong peer connections whose values, interests, and lifestyles are mutually meaningful and reinforcing. Young Jews should seek out and form close relationships with Jewish peers of any/all stripes.

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	VALUES	ATTITUDES	PRACTICES
Recognize how peer connections among Jews foster Jewish community and commitments and influence important life decisions.	Be able to seek out in-person and/or digital Jewish social networks and find opportunities for connection to Jewish peers in structured programs or informal settings.	Living a Jewish life is enhanced by being part of an inclusive Jewish community comprising of diverse Jewish associates who share values, concerns, and life styles that can be mutually reinforcing.	Be open to forming close relationships with Jewish peers. Social networks need not be exclusively Jewish, to be sure, but it is worthwhile to seek out relationships with fellow Jews.	Participate in formal or informal Jewish activities that introduce you to other Jews who share your interests.

4

Engage with Jewish role models and personalities

Role models have an important place in shaping a sense of who we are and want to be. Historical and contemporary Jewish role models include religious figures (such as rabbis, sages, scholars), secular achievers (such as in business, science, government, law, culture), and prominent people in our everyday lives (such as parents, peers, teachers) on the worldwide, national, and/or local levels. Young Jews who identify with positive Jewish role models can be motivated toward personal achievements that make a positive difference in the world and that demonstrate commitment to Jewish life.

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	VALUES	ATTITUDES	PRACTICES
Learn about historical and contemporary Jewish role models, including religious figures (such as rabbis, sages, scholars) and secular achievers (such as in business, science, government, culture) on the worldwide, national, and/or local levels.	Be able to articulate who and/or what types of Jewish personalities are your role models, and why.	The rabbis in <i>Pirkei Avot</i> implore young learners to, first and foremost, “acquire for yourself a teacher,” reflecting a longstanding emphasis in Jewish culture on revering mentors and role models.	Be open to seeking out and calling on Jewish mentors and role models to help guide your young adult life in both Jewish and secular matters.	Ask your own role models or elders who their role models were and how these role models tangibly influenced your own role models.

5

Participate in the *kehilla* (Jewish community)

Kehilla plays a central role in Jewish civilization. Participation in *kehilla* is both a value and a practice that has been central to the preservation of Jewish life over the ages. Young Jews should come to appreciate the value of the organized Jewish community for its professional, logistical, philanthropic, and spiritual support of almost all Jewish activities, by engaging in Jewish communal life.

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	VALUES	ATTITUDES	PRACTICES
Understand the functioning of diverse Jewish communities in biblical Israel, pre-modern Spain, and 19th century Poland (as examples), and derive generalizations about the place of <i>kehilla</i> in Jewish life.	Apply understandings of the function of community in Jewish history to the workings of your local Jewish community today, considering similarities and differences.	<i>Kehilla</i> is central to Jewish life and touches all aspects of collective and individual life.	Appreciate the various forms <i>kehilla</i> takes in daily life, from a morning minyan, to a social service agency, to a wedding ceremony, and much more, demonstrating that Jews are never alone at moments that matter.	Explore and participate in an experience of the <i>kehilla</i> in action, such as a social welfare organization, political rally, or community decision-making process.

The 18 Explained, with Sample Curriculum Platforms

6

Regard Judaism as a relevant source of wisdom for their questions about life and its meaning

Jewish texts and sources ask and answer some of the important questions of life: What is life? How are we created? What is the meaning of life? How does history happen? Is there a divine force? What is the good? Jewish education is not distinct from, but rather is very centrally preoccupied with these very personal questions that we all face. Young Jews should be able to look to Jewish sources to understand and enrich their lives as human beings.

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	VALUES	ATTITUDES	PRACTICES
Understand that Judaism, at its core, addresses meaningful life questions, such as: Who am I? What are my beliefs? What are my values? What does “good” mean?	Be able to interpret classic biblical stories (e.g., Garden of Eden, Noah’s Ark, the Binding of Isaac) as expressions of life’s big existential questions, rather than merely as tales or sagas of an ancient people.	Study, discussion, and deliberation about life’s big questions with wise teachers and peers in one’s family and community is an obligation on par with Jewish ritual and practice and central to living a Jewish life.	Realize that Judaism asks some of the same big existential, moral questions about values, beliefs, and behaviors as other faiths do—i.e., these are core human dilemmas—and that Judaism can provide relevant answers.	Identify traditional and contemporary Jewish responses to some of your own big questions about life, meaning, and values.

7 Appreciate *tikkun olam* (repairing the world) as a core Jewish value, and perform acts of *gemilut chasadim* (giving of loving-kindness)

Tikkun olam has come to mean concern for justice, loving-kindness, and improving the world, as well as aiding the weak, oppressed, and needy the world over. These concepts find their earliest expressions in the Bible, particularly the prophetic teachings, and have reverberated in different times, places, and circumstances through history, up to the present day. Young Jews should appreciate the centrality of *tikkun olam* to Jewish tradition, as reflected in core Jewish texts, and they should develop positive dispositions toward performing acts of *gemilut chasadim* (giving of loving-kindness).

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	VALUES	ATTITUDES	PRACTICES
Understand the biblical notion of the phrase <i>tikkun olam</i> , focusing especially on how the prophets understood repairing the world.	Be able to identify actions and ideas today that constitute the notion of repairing the world, including what constitutes “repair” and what constitutes the “world.”	Judaism emphasizes the idea that the present world can be improved by our well-intentioned ideas and actions, and that humans are partners in making the world a better place.	Develop a positive disposition toward seeing <i>tikkun olam</i> as an imperative for both the Jewish and broader world.	Engage in a sustained activity of <i>gemilut chasadim</i> that demonstrates your understanding and commitment to this core Jewish value.

8

Care about and connect with Israel

The establishment of the State of Israel is one of the important milestones of Jewish history. Its meaning for contemporary Jewry is inspiring and complicated, meaningful and complex, and it generates intensive, deep, open exploration and contemplation. A relational approach to Israel education suggests that individuals can derive meaning both from caring about Israel (i.e., Israel matters to them) and caring for Israel (i.e., connecting with Israel), while engaged in serious questioning. Young Jews should understand the history of the creation of the modern state, the dynamics of contemporary Israel, and the multifaceted issues and nuances involved in these narratives. They should also explore the meaning(s) of Israel for their lives.

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	VALUES	ATTITUDES	PRACTICES
Understand core ideas, events, and facts related to the place of Israel in Jewish tradition; the creation of the modern State of Israel and its achievements over time; and complications that have resulted from the existence of a Jewish state, vis-à-vis Jews and non-Jews alike.	Be able to articulate understandings and verifications as to why Israel is a core part of the Jewish experience.	In Jewish life, “Israel” means a historical place, a religious site, a contemporary society, a modern state, an ongoing aspiration, and/or an idea and dream fulfilled or unfulfilled. Relating to Israel in some way is important for Jewish identification.	Belief in Israel—like most aspects of Jewish belief—includes faith and questioning, pride and problems, and appreciation and critique.	Acquire enough knowledge about and experience with Israel (including visits to Israel) to be able to engage in thoughtful conversation concerning diverse (Jewish and non-Jewish) narratives about Israel.

Read and interpret sacred and historical texts and be able to discern Jewish core narratives (stories, sagas, events) and values within them

Jewish civilization is replete with core narratives that have their origins in the Bible and have continued to shape Jewish civilization throughout the centuries. They include:

- > **EXODUS** – from oppression to liberation
- > **SINAI** – the role of covenant and law in life
- > **TORAH** – the notion of study as integral to life
- > **ZION** – the role of Israel in the Jewish experience
- > **REDEMPTION** – the role of the ideal society, Messianism, and redemption in Jewish tradition

Young Jews should have skills to be able to read, analyze, and delve into the deeper meanings of sacred and historical texts in which these narratives and values feature prominently. They should be able to reflect on their own views of these narratives and values.

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	VALUES	ATTITUDES	PRACTICES
Identify and understand some of the core master-narratives of Jewish life, including Exodus, Sinai, Torah, Zion, and Redemption.	Be able to articulate a basic understanding of these foundational narratives to uncover the values inherent in the narratives (e.g., freedom, justice, dignity) and to express a connection of those values to one's life today.	These master-narratives are essential to understanding Judaism and Jewish life. Even if they each represent a form of Jewish truth, there is a range of interpretation among Jewish communities and individuals regarding each of these narratives.	These narratives—and the interpretation of these narratives—continually evolve, and you can participate in that process by applying the narrative to new contexts and/or adding your voice to it.	Seek out instantiations of these narratives in Jewish practice (e.g., Exodus during the Passover <i>seder</i>) and provide your own interpretation of how they resonate today.

10

Recognize the role wrestling with God has played in Jewish life

The belief in an omniscient and omnipotent God has been central to traditional Jewish life since biblical times. This notion implies a world, moral code, and personal life shaped by the values, ideals, and expressions of divinity. At the same time, Judaism has long recognized the difficult struggle between human and divine actions and impulses. Jacob famously wrestles with God in the Bible, earning him the name “Israel” (Hebrew for “God struggler”); his descendants, the Children of Israel, continued this struggle. It is impossible to understand Jewish life over the ages without minimally understanding the centrality of this concept. Young Jews should comprehend classical and contemporary conceptions of God in order to enable their own wrestling with this idea today.

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	VALUES	ATTITUDES	PRACTICES
Understand the all-knowing and all-powerful qualities ascribed to God in the Bible and diverse post-biblical efforts to build Judaism on different (or without) notions of God.	Be able to distinguish contemporary Jewish religious sub-groups (i.e., traditionalists, liberals, seculars) by their different conceptions of God.	Jewish faith centers on the notion of divine or spiritual presence (e.g., <i>neshama</i> , the soul).	Exploring and reflecting on God’s complex relationship to human life is a longstanding and important aspect of being Jewish.	Treat the subject of God with sincerity, rigor, and humility, and treat diverse perspectives about God—Jewish, non-Jewish, atheist—with openness and respect.

Open themselves up to divinity through theology, prayer, study, or other spiritual practices

The practices of Jewish life throughout the ages have been infused with rituals, celebrations, and observances related to the core notion of divinity. One of the ways that Jews lived their lives was by performing these practices in the name of piety. Young Jews should be open to engaging with Jewish life through prayer, study, or other spiritual practices as part of their own experience engaging with the divine.

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	VALUES	ATTITUDES	PRACTICES
Understand that the notion of <i>avodah</i> (Jewish practice) was regarded as one of several gateways toward experience of the divine in biblical times and beyond.	Be able to recite and explicate the <i>Sh'ma</i> —Judaism's central prayer—as a way to understand the traditional connection of religious practice and God.	An appreciation of the relationship of Jews to the divine enhances understanding of Jewish tradition (customs, rituals, practices) and provides entry points for engagement with spirituality.	By becoming aware of your place in the cosmos, including the encounter with that which is greater than yourself (e.g., natural wonders), you can learn to think and feel beyond your own immediate wants, needs, and interests, and toward appreciation for something far greater, however you choose to interpret it.	Participate in any or all of the following experiences—mindful prayer, meditation, ritual, Jewish text study, acts of loving-kindness, social justice work—and contemplate their spiritual dimensions.

The 18 Explained, with Sample Curriculum Platforms

12

Understand the mutual influence of Jewish and broader culture on each other and on contemporary Jews

Jewish life throughout the ages has always been a part of and apart from the local context in which it exists. Some settings have been accommodating to Jews, some have been less so, and others have been disastrous. In all places where Jewish life has existed, Jewish and broader cultures have interacted intimately with each other. Indeed, it is only possible to understand Jewish life by understanding its broader social, political, and cultural milieu. Young Jews should be able to contextualize Judaism, Jewish life, and the Jewish people within the larger framework of world events. They should understand mutually the values, rights, opportunities, and responsibilities of full participation in American citizenship/culture and Jewish community/culture.

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	VALUES	ATTITUDES	PRACTICES
Understand mutually the values, rights, opportunities, and responsibilities of full participation in American citizenship/culture and Jewish community/culture.	Be able to discern elements of Jewish and general culture that clearly overlap (e.g., universal moral codes), that clearly diverge (e.g., religious beliefs), and that sometimes intersect in more complex ways (e.g., the direct influence of Jews on general culture, and vice versa).	Although Judaism may be a unique religious, moral, and historical tradition, it did not arise in a vacuum; to the contrary, Judaism, Jewish life, and the Jewish people are inextricably bound to the larger context in which they emerged and continue to exist.	Look at contemporary American Jewish life in terms of contemporary life in America — not through an exclusively Jewish or an exclusively general political and cultural lens.	Embrace—in the spirit of Mordecai Kaplan—the celebration of American national holidays (e.g., Thanksgiving, Labor Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day) as expressions of American, Jewish, and universal values and symbols, and of civic engagement.

13 Be able to identify critical issues facing American Jewry and be motivated to act on them

The establishment of the American Jewish community is an impressive achievement in the history of Jewish civilization. At the same time, it regularly confronts critical issues regarding its strength and continuity that compel individual and communal response. Young Jews should be able to articulate critical issues that shape contemporary American Jewish life (e.g., pluralism, diverse ways of being Jewish, Israel, assimilation, intermarriage, anti-Semitism, spirituality, stratification, social justice, and more). In addition, they should be inspired to create their own agenda for the American Jewish community moving forward, and ultimately, to act on it.

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	VALUES	ATTITUDES	PRACTICES
Become familiar with some of the longstanding and still contemporary issues on the agenda of American Jewish life, including the various ways of being Jewish in America, assimilation, anti-Semitism, relationship with Israel, intermarriage, the voluntary Jewish community, Jewish education, and relations with the broader American society.	Be able to discuss and cite evidence as to why these issues are of concern to the adult American Jewish community.	American Jews are, at once, a part of and apart from the broader American society. American Jewry is committed to retaining its unique character while also becoming full-fledged members of the American community.	Appreciate the commonalities and diversities of American Jewish life and their implications for participation in the adult American Jewish community.	Choose and investigate items on the American Jewish communal agenda—or initiate new items of your own—that are of special importance to you and articulate a stance on these issues.

14

Understand the meanings and performance of Jewish *mitzvot*

Mitzvah comes from the Hebrew word meaning “obligation” or “commandment” and has been attached to a multitude of behaviors that traditional Judaism has regarded as incumbent on the Jew. The understanding of both the performance of *mitzvot* and their meaning is a central aspect of Jewish life. Young Jews should be competent and comfortable with the performance of *mitzvot* and at the same time be able to explicate the symbolic reasons for performing the *mitzvot*.

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	VALUES	ATTITUDES	PRACTICES
Understand that there are various kinds of <i>mitzvot</i> that traditionally have been categorized in various ways to help us make meaning of them (e.g., positive/negative, ethical/ritual, <i>l'makom (to God)/l'chavero (to human beings)</i>). Some of the 613 <i>mitzvot</i> described in the Torah are historical and can only be performed in a Temple (e.g., ritual sacrifice), while many others are easily applicable to present-day circumstances (e.g., ethical laws).	Be able to discern what types of <i>mitzvot</i> are commandments (i.e., obligatory acts for observant Jews), which are good deeds (i.e., voluntary acts for anyone leading an ethical life), and which are rituals that sustain Jewish culture (i.e., Jewish customs).	<i>Mitzvot</i> help us to frame actions as Jewish and help us to be more conscious of our behaviors.	Be eager to perform <i>mitzvot</i> out of a sense of religious obligation, ethical principle, custom, and/or historical consciousness.	With the knowledge of the various kinds of <i>mitzvot</i> , choose a new <i>mitzvah</i> every week/month to focus on, practice, and reflect upon.

15 Participate in various Jewish rituals, customs, holidays, and lifecycle events, and appreciate their history and meaning

Rituals, holidays, and lifecycle events are traditions that have held great attraction for large numbers of Jews in the past and present (e.g., Passover *seder*, Shabbat dinner). Observances of holidays and lifecycle events are varied and continue to evolve as Jewish communities become more diverse. Such celebrations are important expressions of connectedness and community, and they provide personal joy and fulfillment. Young Jews should have the opportunity to participate in a panoply of rituals, holidays, and lifecycle traditions that involve family, peers, and other social networks.

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	VALUES	ATTITUDES	PRACTICES
Become familiar with the fundamental aspects (i.e., reasons for, basic practices of) of major Jewish holidays and lifecycle events and their associated rituals and customs.	Be able to recognize traditional Jewish ritual objects, symbols, and motifs, and what they stand for.	Celebrations of rituals, customs, holidays, and lifestyle events are important expressions of Jewish connectedness and community and provide personal joy and fulfillment.	Be disposed toward embracing openly and respectfully the variety of ways that holidays and lifecycle events are celebrated by various Jews from varying backgrounds.	Participate in a panoply of Jewish holidays and lifecycle events and reflect on what elements are both rich and authentic to your own Jewish life.

The 18 Explained, with Sample Curriculum Platforms

16

Comprehend and utilize Hebrew words and other Jewish terminology

Language is a central element of every culture, and the Hebrew language has been important for Jewish civilization. Young Jews should have opportunities to access and participate in Hebrew-based cultural environs as part of the journey to becoming linguistically literate. They should become familiar with a select body of Hebrew terms that have special resonance in Jewish life (e.g., *shalom*, *Shabbat*, *mitzvah*, *tzedakah*, *kaddish*, *kiddush*, *brit milah*), as well as terms from other Jewish languages like Yiddish and Ladino, all of which constitute a basic form of Jewish fluency.

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	VALUES	ATTITUDES	PRACTICES
Develop basic Hebrew cultural literacy, a selected body of terms that have special resonance in Jewish life (e.g., <i>shalom</i> , <i>Shabbat</i> , <i>mitzvah</i> , <i>tzedakah</i> , <i>kaddish</i> , <i>kiddush</i> , <i>brit milah</i>).	Identify Hebrew letters and sound out Hebrew words.	The Hebrew language is both a cultural transmitter and a means of social cohesion among Jews.	Appreciate the potential to connect to Israel and to Jews the world over through historical/national Jewish languages.	Utilize Hebrew terms in appropriate context (e.g., be able to recite key prayers, such as the <i>Sh'ma</i> , in Hebrew or transliteration).

17

Partake in Jewish culinary traditions

Partaking in Jewish culinary traditions is a way to keep one's family history alive, to awaken a sense of nostalgia, to connect with a broader cultural universe, and, literally and figuratively, to inspire and feed an appetite for things Jewish. The diversity of Jewish culinary traditions, from communities around the world, connects Jews over time and place. Preparing and partaking in special foods is among life's most sensuous pleasures as well, involving sight, smell, touch, and, of course, good taste. Young Jews should participate in these experiences—as creators and consumers—as a gateway to Jewish connection.

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	VALUES	ATTITUDES	PRACTICES
Understand the basic laws and practices of <i>kashrut</i> and the ways that <i>kashrut</i> is interpreted in contemporary times (e.g., <i>eco-kashrut</i>).	Be able to read a list of ingredients on a food package and recognize potentially non-kosher ingredients (e.g., lard, natural meat flavors).	Participating in Jewish culinary traditions is a way to inspire and feed an appetite for things Jewish.	Seek out opportunities to partake in Jewish food rituals (e.g., participate in a Passover <i>seder</i> , bake hamentaschen for <i>mishloah manot</i> , eat falafel on the streets of Jerusalem).	Try out different recipes for one Jewish food item (e.g., <i>charoset</i> , <i>challah</i>) from around the world. See how they compare and what appeals to you most.

The 18 Explained, with Sample Curriculum Platforms

18

Experience Jewish arts and culture

Jewish artistic and cultural expressions (e.g., music, literature, art, crafts, and film) reflect histories, values, assumptions, norms, and dilemmas that are particular to the Jewish experience. Whether they are religious or not, many Jews find their connection to Judaism through the arts and culture. Young Jews should be exposed to Jewish arts and culture that cross many political, social, ethnic, and religious boundaries and learn to create or co-opt their own forms of Jewish expression as part of their Jewish journey.

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	VALUES	ATTITUDES	PRACTICES
Gain broad exposure to the complex ways Jewish artists have explored their relationships to Judaism and Jewish life through various artistic and cultural media (e.g., literature, visual arts, crafts, music, dance, film, fashion).	Be able to interpret selected, age-appropriate works of Jewish art in light of their Jewish themes.	Jewish artistic and cultural expressions reflect histories, values, assumptions, norms, and dilemmas that are particular to the Jewish experience, and cross many political, social, ethnic, and religious boundaries.	Develop an empathy, understanding, and connection to Jewish motifs in arts and culture.	Create or participate in an artistic and/or cultural form of Jewish expression.



CONCLUSION

Ways to Use the 18x18 Framework

Achieving good educational outcomes requires backward planning—that is, starting with the ideal outcomes in mind and scaffolding educational experiences accordingly. Each of the basic curriculum platforms above suggests fundamental building blocks for a curriculum that can be elaborated upon on a setting-by-setting basis. Indeed, we expect that every educator, in every educational venue, in every community, will fill in the relevant specifics for themselves. In each of these cases, the general framework would still be the same—these are 18 Jewish Things a Young Jew Should Know, Care About, and Be Able to Do by Age 18—but the specific content and instructional methods would differ depending on the learners and settings.

Developing and implementing an educational program that covers all the components of the framework is no guarantee of its success. Rather, the 18x18 Framework serves mainly as an aspirational statement of desired outcomes for the Jewish education enterprise: 18 Jewish Things a Young Jew Should Know, Care About, and Be Able to Do by Age 18. Our assumption is that the better equipped young Jews are along the lines the framework suggests, the more prepared they will be to become committed participants in adult Jewish life.



Ben Jacobs, Associate Research Professor in the Graduate School of Education and Human Development at GW, has spent most of his professional career preparing educators for school and non-school settings and consulting with various Jewish education agencies on curriculum and teaching. His publications have appeared in diverse outlets including *Teachers College Record*, *Theory and Research in Social Education*, and *Journal of Jewish Education*, as well as the *International Handbook of Jewish Education* and the *Cambridge Dictionary of Judaism and Jewish Culture*. He is the author, along with Barry Chazan and Robert Chazan, of *Cultures and Contexts of Jewish Education* (Palgrave-Macmillan, 2017). Dr. Jacobs earned his Ph.D. from Teachers College, Columbia University, as a Wexner Graduate Fellow. He previously taught at Teachers College, the University of Minnesota, and New York University, where he was co-founder and assistant director of the graduate programs in Education and Jewish Studies. He currently serves on the advisory board for the Consortium for Applied Studies in Jewish Education (CASJE).



Barry Chazan is Professor Emeritus of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Professor of Education at the Spertus Institute of Jewish Learning and Leadership, and Research Professor at The George Washington University Graduate School of Education and Human Development.

The full report of the Jewish Paideia Project is available upon request.



7 E 10th St, New York, NY 10003
www.bronfmancenter.org/nyu-arc

