

INTRODUCING AJL'S NEW JEWISH VALUESFINDER

Linda Silver

Description: Linda Silver will speak about the new guide she is compiling as a successor to Marcia Posner's JUVENILE JUDAICA. It is called THE NEW JEWISH VALUESFINDER and is on the web at www.ajljewishvalues.org. She will describe how titles are selected, how values are identified, how the guide may be used, and will highlight some outstanding examples.

Linda Silver is the librarian of the Jewish Education Center of Cleveland. Her M.L.S. is from Case Western Reserve University and she has wide experience in public, school, and Judaic libraries. Linda specializes in children's literature. She is the editor of the children's book review section of *Jewish Book World*, co-editor, with Ellen Cole, of the children's book review section of the *AJL Newsletter*, a columnist for CAJE's Jewish Education News, a reviewer for *School Library Journal* and the *Cleveland Jewish News*, editor of an AJL publication called Developing a Judaic Children's Collection: Recommended Books and Videos, and editor of AJL's web published guide called "The New Jewish Valuesfinder".

Jewish Values

“I believe that a values-oriented literature makes distinctions between what is false and what is true, what is good and what is evil. True for whom? Good for whom? For humanity... A values-oriented literature tells the reader, ‘L’Chaim – choose life.’” (Sonia Levitin, “Jewish Values and Cultural Transformations: Four Key Questions,” First International Symposium on Jewish Children’s Literature, *Judaica Librarianship*, Vol. 7, No. 1-2, Spring 1992-Winter 1993, p. 26).

“Stories create opportunities for readers to consider values that guide human action in both the imaginary context of the story and the real context of their lives... the whole curriculum of schooling is, at a bedrock level, about the same thing: how we should conduct ourselves as human beings in relation to one another... literature embodies a major part of the reasons, explanations, suggestions, and models that young people need if they are to own the values of their culture.” (Thomas H. Estes and Dorothy Vasquez-Levy, “Literature As a Source of Information and Values,” *Phi Delta Kappa*, March 2001, p. 507).

“...Jewish books – whether they are humorous and light, or grappling with serious matters – should have something Jewish to say to their readers. And to me, ‘something Jewish’ means that, in some way, a book is plugged into the central nervous system of Jewish lore and knowledge, that it looks to Jewish sources for direction, and that it starts from the premise that the foundation of Jewish truth and wisdom – i.e., the Torah – is our unwavering focal point.” (Yaffa Ganz, “Values in Jewish Children’s Literature,” First International Symposium on Jewish Children’s Literature, *Judaica Librarianship*, Vol. 7, No. 1-2, Spring 1992-Winter 1993, p. 23).

“Basic to all the higher religions are ideals corresponding closely to those described as Jewish. Non-religious, as well as religious, ethical thinkers have expounded the worth of humility, truth, love, and compassion. If the adjective “Jewish” is used the intention is to suggest: (a) that these values receive a special kind of emphasis in the Jewish tradition, a Jewish way of looking at them, and (b) that they are no remote ideals but are a real, vital force in the lives of Jews.” (Louis Jacobs, *The Jewish Religion: A Companion*. Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 574).

“[Jewish values] are found in our texts, in our teachings from ancient times to the present, in the beliefs and behaviors that characterize the Jewish people, in the qualities that enabled our survival, and in the ideals that we teach our children. Explicitly naming these values as Jewish honors our past, expresses pride in our heritage and suggests to others, our children included, that Jewish values are an esteemed and trustworthy guide to the Jewish future.” (Linda R. Silver, *The New Jewish Valuesfinder*, www.ajljewishvalues.org).

VALUESFINDER DEMONSTRATION

Have Internet open to Valuesfinder Homepage

What are Jewish values?

Refer to handout with quotes from articles, etc.

Click on Jewish Values and refer briefly to terminology: mitzvot, middot, etc.

Return to Homepage.

The Valuesfinder's Background and Purposes

Click on Introduction, credit Marcia, and explain Juvenile Judaica.

Click on Selection Criteria and explain.

Click on Scope and explain.

The Valuesfinder's Database

Click on Search Database and show how to find a list of all of the titles in the Valuesfinder's database by clearing all fields and clicking on Search.

Click on Modify Search at top of page and show how to find a list of all of the values used in the Valuesfinder. Point out that there are different ways of expressing a value so the term you use may not be the one used in the Valuesfinder and some searching, using synonyms or surrogate terms, will be necessary. For example, the values curriculum that will be presented next includes the values of "lev tov" – caring. Show that "caring" by itself is not in the list but caring for...is and that surrogate expressions for caring will also be found, for example: "feeding the hungry."

Close values list and return to title list.

Click on Adler's A HERO AND THE HOLOCAUST. Discuss each part of the record.

Click on Search Again (at bottom of page). Point out the searchable fields.

Searching

Review Searching Tips.

Show how typing in Eric Kimmel will get 14 results, including Kimmelman and Erica. Explain why.

Click on Modify Search. Check box and search again, using Eric Kimmel.

Explain that when you click on the author or the title box, you are narrowing your search to the exact wording used in the Valuesfinder.

Authors' names are entered last name first, with initial if it is commonly used, so you will have to type in Kimmel, Eric A.

Type Kimmel, Eric A. Show how the results are ONLY his books.

Click on Modify Search. In title field, type in **CHICKEN SOUP BY HEART** to show how the computer searches for every record with one or more of

- those four words in it and how 9 titles are shown.
- Click on Modify Search. Check title box and search again.** Show how using the exact title will narrow the search to only that title.
- Click on Modify Search. In Values field, type in Visiting the Sick.**
- Click on Lila Tov** by Abraham. Is “visiting the sick” one of its values?
No. Explain why it appears and why this search resulted in 209 records.
- Click on Modify Search. In Values field, type in visiting** and explain the difference in results.
- Click on Tikun Olam** by Fenton, point out its values, one of which is Visiting the Sick.
- Click on Search Again.** Repeat the importance of narrowing search terms. Refine the search by Award and by grade level.
- Click on Modify Search. Search by subject: Holidays.**
- Click on Modify Search. Refine by grade level: Primary.**
- Click on Modify Search. Refine by Award.**
- Click on Modify Search. Clear all fields and click on Preschool.** Point out that these are all of the preschool books currently in the database and ask how a list by grade range may be used.

Other Features of the Valuesfinder

- Return to Homepage.**
- Click on Search.** In title field, type in Adara. Show how some records include suggestions for book talks and other program or curriculum uses.
- Click on Search Again and from search page, click on:**
- Award Books**
 - Notable Books**
 - What’s New?** reminding them that this is where updates, news, etc. will be found and to check it frequently.
 - Links**
 - Contact Us**