



Yahadut Zmaneinu, Moreshet Ha'am

# YOZMA

AN ISRAELI JEWISH INITIATIVE IN MODI'IN



## Each One of Us is Queen Esther

The Purim holiday highlights the issue of women's leadership. We seek to instill in our students the issue of equality between the sexes and the responsibility of the community for which each one of us is accountable. In most other holidays, men are at the center of events, Purim is a holiday where a woman is responsible for the outcome. Compared to Vashti, the modern woman, Esther is pictured as a *respectable* woman willing to sacrifice her happiness to save her people. Indeed we celebrate this holiday thanks to Esther's ingenuity and entreaty to our sages to be placed in Jewish memory for all generations. The Purim lesson plan must cope with a challenging and involved educational mission- to bring the students closer to an unfamiliar, foreign world - typically unrelated to their daily life. Developing a sense of belonging, an ability to identify, empathize and appreciate - these are not fostered just by providing knowledge. At YOZMA, we stress a learning and teaching process with experiential learning with relevance to the students lives through active participatory learning, involving responsibility to oneself, the community, Jewish Israeli society and the environment. Israeli life is paved with societal, economic and security difficulties. Sensitivity to our nation and the weak in society combined with working for equality and taking individual responsibility for events surrounding us, emphasizes how **each one of us is Queen Esther**.

### *More about what is happening at the school...*

Throughout the entire week the students are playing the Israeli version of "Secret Santa" called "Dwarves and Giants" (anonymous gift exchange). Treats are brought in for each person's *giant* by each child's *dwarf*. On Friday the students will be distributing Purim gift baskets they purchased through AKIM (National Association for the Habilitation of the Mentally Handicapped in Israel) with a card created and made by each student for their "dwarf" (the one who gave them gifts all week). At the end of the week, each child finally discovers who has been spoiling and surprising them all week. In addition, each child is bringing items for the class gift baskets for the children of the Beit Eden group home for developmentally-challenged youth, for children of foreign workers and for children hospitalized in the oncology ward.

The evening before the Purim festivities, parents will join the school staff to decorate and adorn the school. The classes will become castles, the grounds a Persian markets so when the children arrive to the gates of the school an immense and exciting surprise will await them. And then begins the celebration...

Nava Asulin  
Principal, YOZMA Elementary School

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**YOZMA** - Judaism of Our Time, Heritage of Our People

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