

# יסודי הלשון

Uncovering the Fundamentals  
and Secrets of Speech

A Curriculum on דיבור יפה





## CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

### Program Objectives:

- a. To present students with essential, age-appropriate tools to communicate properly with their peers
- b. To help them implement these tools in their daily interactions

### Objectives Achieved by:

- a. **Curriculum Material**—to present the tools in various ways, engaging each student as they master a clear understanding of the material
- b. **Incentive System** to encourage students to implement these lessons (*incentive system still being developed*)

### Curriculum Structure:

The curriculum is constructed of **26 weekly focuses** with *daily* lesson plans to fully develop the focus of the week.

Each week's lesson includes the following components:

Day 1	<b>Cluing In</b>	Intriguing lesson that presents the focus of the week
	<b>Resolution</b>	A practical <i>kaballah</i> for students to apply the focus of the week
Day 2	<b>Reviewing the Evidence</b>	An engaging serialized story to portray how children, like themselves, work through the week's focus
Day 3	<b>From the Source</b>	A <i>passuk/chazal</i> with explanation to substantiate the importance of what they're learning
	<b>Case in Point</b>	A story of how a <i>gadol</i> personified the lesson being taught
Day 4	<b>In Action</b>	An activity, such as role-playing, to help deepen the students' understanding of the focus
Day 5	<b>Mission Accomplished</b>	Journal questions to help students track their progress of the week

The program includes an insightful **Teachers' Edition** to further enhance the material



## **INDEX:**

1. **Introduction 1:** How we are all dependent on others on a daily basis
2. **Introduction 2:** The power of words
3. **Introduction 3:** How much we gain by speaking pleasantly
4. **Smile**
5. **Greetings**
6. **Compliments**
7. **Tone of voice**
8. **Choice of Words**
9. ***Emes/Sheker***
10. ***Tesumas Lev***
11. **Empathy**
12. **Respect people's privacy**
13. **Conversation a**
14. **Conversation b**
15. **Asking for a favor**
16. ***Hakoras Hatov***
17. **Respecting Differences**
18. **Tools to Resolve Conflicts**
19. **Anger**
20. **Mistakes**
21. ***Loshon hora***
22. ***Rechilus***
23. ***Ona'as Devarim***
24. **Hurtful jokes**
25. **Apologies**
26. **Conclusion**





# Cluing in



## Week 1: Communication

**I** *Imagine waking up one morning completely unable to utter even a single word. You open your mouth to tell your mother that you prefer scrambled eggs over sunny-side-up and... nothing happens. You try to ask your brother if you can borrow his sweater, but not a single sound comes out of your mouth! When you get to school, your problem becomes even worse. All around you, your classmates are chatting, shouting, and joking together. You want to tell your best friend that you finally finished that 1,000-piece puzzle last night, but... although your lips are moving, no sounds emerge!*

We all need people in our lives. Living in a world full of people – family, friends and neighbors – gives us many ways to enjoy life and fill it with happiness. But does being with people automatically make life happy and enjoyable?

Of course not! You need to be able to *communicate*.

**Communication.** This is the way we connect with other people and let them know what we want, think or feel. We do this all the time by speaking or writing, or through our actions and facial expressions. If we want to have anything to do with others (for instance: get information from them, share our feelings, build friendships, ask them to do something for us), we need to connect to them through *communication*.

Mastering proper communication can help us throughout our lives in many, many ways.  
*The better we communicate, the more enjoyable life will be.*



### To Do

*Every day this week: Think of one person you know. Think of one reason why you may need to communicate with him or her today.*



# Reviewing the Evidence



Week 1: Day 2

## “Ideas, Anyone?”

“Okay, everyone,” Levi announced stiffly. “The first inaugural meeting of the ‘winning team’ will begin now. Will everyone please be silent.”

“Aye, aye,” Moshe said, rolling his eyes. “And it’s ‘inaugural.’”

“Okay, whatever. Anyway, everyone take cookies and juice—there’s plenty more in the kitchen,” he gestured dramatically. David took Levi’s suggestion, reaching for a handful of cookies. “First item on the agenda is, well, uh,—”

“What’s our team gonna do?” Mendel broke in, grimacing. “Cookies and juice and meetings are all very nice, but we don’t have any idea of what to—”

“Well, why do you think we’re sitting here today?” Moshe interrupted him, glaring. “To make a plan! I mean, c’mon! We need a—”

“What we need is something unique, something totally different from what other groups are doing. And once we come up with that ‘something,’ we have to keep it top secret so no one steals it and—”

“Okay, everyone, enough talking about what we need. Let’s talk about coming up with a great plan!” Levi shouted, feeling irritated. “Just think: Dibbur Yafeh, Dibbur Yafeh.”

“How about a gigantic poster of two boys speaking not nicely to each other and then—”

“Nah, how about making this machine like a tape recorder but it looks like a gigantic mouth and we pre-record all these nice expressions and when people walk by our table it says things like, ‘I’m so happy to see you!’ and—”

“Whaaaaat?! That’s ridiculous! What we need to do is a skit. I’m sure no one’s doing a skit. And it’ll be much more interesting than anything else. Remember, we want the judges to look at our exhibit and say, ‘Wow! This is really—’”

“Come on, you guys, it’s so noisy in here we’re not getting anywhere! And where do you come up with these *ideas*?!”

Four boys sat glaring at each other around the table. Moshe’s hair was ruffled from running his fingers through it. David had chewed through the tip of his pencil. Levi’s face was red, and Mendel glowered.

There was a short, tense silence.

“Wow, we’re *really* getting somewhere!” Mendel said sarcastically. “What a great winning team!”

Levi frowned.

“I really don’t know what’s going wrong,” he said slowly. “I thought this would be a piece of cake. Just have everyone meet together, come up with an idea, and bam! Make our project! Instead, we’re all just



## Week 1: Day 2

### “Ideas, Anyone?”

CONTINUED

And we all just looked at him open-mouthed?”

“Yeah,” Moshe chuckled. “That was funny! What a great way to launch the program!”

“Well, seems like we might need to copy Rebbi and go back to square one,” David said quietly.

“C-o-m-m-u-n-i-c-a-t-i-o-n,” Levi sighed heavily. “You’re right. We’re not communicating.”

“We’re each in our own little world, spilling out ideas like jellybeans, all over the place, not paying attention to what the other guy is saying. How in the world can we expect to come up with anything decent?”

Moshe bit his lip.

“Good point!” he said. “Good point!”

“Rrrrrright,” said Levi. “A little communication goes a long way, huh?” He turned to Mendel. “Thanks for the lesson, Rebbi. What do you say we each take turns speaking for a couple of minutes—*uninterrupted*—so we can get our ideas across. We can write down each idea and then discuss the pros and cons of each one.”

“And then we can vote on the one we think is best!” David chimed in happily. “Sounds great!”

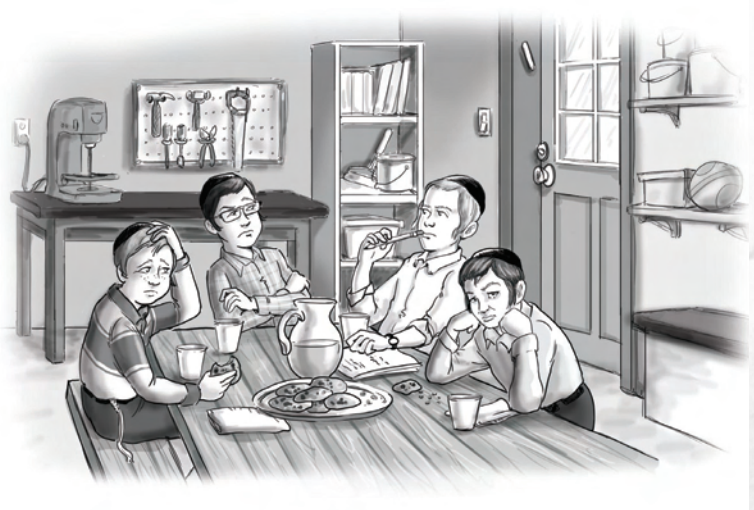
“Give me a ‘W!’” shouted Moshe. “Gimme an ‘I’! Gimme an ‘N!’”

Everyone laughed. “Now we’re talking!” Levi grinned.

getting on each other’s nerves!”

His friends all examined the carpet.

“Since this is a Dibbur Yafeh project, I may as well quote from our Dibbur Yafeh lessons,” David began slowly. “Remember that first lesson we learned, where Rebbi came in and said, ‘Give me a ‘C’! Give me an ‘O’! Give me an ‘M’!”





# From the Source



Week 1: Day 3

וַיִּפַּח בְּאַפָּיו נְשָׁמַת חַיִּים (בראשית ב:ז)

When Hashem created Adam, it says, "And He blew into his nostrils a living soul."

Targum Onkelus translates נְשָׁמַת חַיִּים as "a speaking spirit." What makes a person greater than anything else Hashem created? His ability to speak.

## Case in Point



### The Shabbos Guest

Adapted from "Touched by a Story, Vol. III", by Rabbi Yechiel Spero, with permission from the copyright holders Artscroll/Mesorah Publications, Ltd.

Every Shabbos, the young men from the yeshivah in Pressburg would eat their meals at the homes of members of the community. After davening, they would leave the *beis midrash* together and walk through the town to their hosts' homes. Every week, one of the young men would wander off by himself for a while, and then catch up with the group a few blocks away. This young man, Chaim, was well respected among his friends as a caring, generous person, always ready to help someone in need. Chaim's "disappearing act" made his friends curious, and they decided to follow him one week to see where he went.

The next Shabbos morning, some of the boys followed Chaim quietly into a particularly poor part of town. Chaim walked to a basement apartment and knocked gently on the door. An old woman answered and Chaim wished her a warm, "Gut Shabbos." Seeing the smile on her face, they assumed that this was his grandmother. They managed to get away before he could see them, but when he rejoined the group, they confessed that they had followed him. "So," they asked, "who is that woman – your grandmother?"

A bit embarrassed that he had been "caught in the act," Chaim shyly responded that the woman was not his grandmother. His friends became even more curious. "Then why do you go to wish her a good Shabbos every week?" By this time, a bigger crowd had gathered, with everyone eager to hear Chaim's story.

"The truth is that this woman is a widow; her husband died many years ago. She has very little family around and I know that she's often very lonely. So I figured I would go visit her, talk to her, and wish her a good Shabbos. She seems so happy when I come and it is such an easy thing to do – how could I not?"

The boys were stunned. They were amazed that their young friend had the sensitivity to take the time to speak to an elderly widow. They knew then that this boy would become something special.

Chaim's friends were correct in predicting that this young man was destined for greatness. Young Chaim grew to become the great Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, Rav of Yerushalayim!





# In Action

Activity

Week 1: Day 4

## Lost in China

**I**magine being lost on the main street in China. Hundreds of people are milling around you, talking to each other, but you feel completely alone.

You realize that you need help. You need to call your mother to let her know where you are. Many of the people around you have cell phones, but you cannot speak their language.

**How can you communicate with them to let them know what you need?**

**W**hen you communicate with a man in China, or when you communicate with the grocer to ask him where the sour sticks are, do you feel like you became his friend? On the other hand, after you have a conversation with a good friend, do you feel closer to him? Why?

月 官 匹 刀 三  
A B C D E





# Mission Accomplished



Week 1: Day 5

Write your answers in your Student Log or on the lines below.

**This week:** You wrote about why you need to communicate with various people. Choose one person who you wrote about. Imagine not being with that person for a few weeks. Write down what you would miss about him or her.

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## Think about it!

**N**ext time you are about to say hurtful words to that person, think about how much you appreciate him or her. This will help you speak in ways that keep your connection with the person strong and pleasant.



## Cluing in



### Week 2: Power of Words

**W**e all love gadgets and tools. When we pick up a powerful tool or useful gadget, we imagine all the things we can do with it. But do you know that you own a tool more powerful and incredible than any tool your parents have in your tool shed or any gadget you can buy at a store?

You have a device that can change things thousands of miles away. It has toppled the most powerful rulers and left them in disgrace and has enabled the lowest people to rise to the highest distinction. It can magically turn people from happy to sad, and turn a bitter enemy into a close friend.

#### What is this tool? Your power of speech.

When you speak you are *affecting* people. A few simple words can motivate an almost-loser to win a competition or make a guaranteed winner give up.

The act of speech actually creates powerful energy that can pass through dozens of people, affecting all of them and especially the person to whom you spoke. Unlike a light bulb or a machine that loses its power when it is unplugged, the words we speak can keep giving off their positive or negative energy long after we stop speaking. When we speak to another person, the impact our words have on him or her can last a lifetime.

*Words are by far the most powerful tool we own. They can build people or destroy them.*



### To Do

Each day this week, use your words in a positive way during lunch or recess. Find something nice to say to someone, and try to notice how it makes him feel.

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### WEEK 2 OBJECTIVE:

Students will learn that their words have incredible power to build or destroy people.



#### Make It Visual!

Bring in a hammer. Bang it on the desk. You'll get your students attention! You can also bring a board and nails, and describe what you can do with a hammer, how you can build something with it. Then go on to describe how a hammer can be destructive if you swing it around without care or use it while blindfolded.

You can lead a short discussion of how our words are a tool and how we can build with them, provided we know how to use them well and avoid throwing them around indiscriminately. You can even emphasize how words can keep damaging or building other people long after you say them, and far from the location in which you spoke them. In contrast, the impact of the hammer is limited to the object it hits.

#### To Do

*Objective: Students will practice using their power of speech in a positive way.*





סודי הלשון  
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and Secrets of Speech

## Reviewing the Evidence

Week 2: Day 2

### The Comment

“Don’t you get bored all day, Zeidy?” Levi dangled his legs on the porch swing, enjoying the sunshine on his face and his beloved grandfather sitting right next to him.

Zeidy smiled patiently, the way he always did when anyone asked him a question.

“Bored?” His bright blue eyes twinkled. “How could I possibly be bored? I never have time to be bored!” Zeidy spread out his fingers and began to tick them off. “I get up to *daven* at *Neitz*, then I have my *Daf Yomi shiur*, then I stay for the Rav’s *parshah* class. I come home and have a little breakfast; then I have a learning session with my friend Mr. Klein until noon. After lunch, I take a little nap, and then my precious *einiklach* come home! How could I possibly be bored?”

Levi swung gently, thinking.

“It’s so nice to spend time with you, Levi *zeeskeit*,” Zeidy said. “I was just telling my *chavrusa*, Mr. Klein, what a pleasure it is to have a grandson like my Levi!”

Levi grinned.

“Zeidy, you always know what to say,” he said. “You always make everyone feel so good! Even my friends noticed. When we were meeting last night and you came in and gave us some encouragement, we all felt a mile tall. Moshe said, ‘Your Zeidy always makes me feel good!’”

Zeidy smiled lovingly.

“You know,” he said, “what you said just now is making me think of something that happened a long, long time ago. Would you happen to be in the mood for a story?”

“Of course!” Levi practically shouted. Zeidy’s stories were always a treat.

“This story happened, oh, about fifty years ago,” Zeidy began, stretching out comfortably on his seat. “Your Bubby and I had just come over to America and we were nearly alone in the world. We had my uncle, Shmiel, helping us with the bare minimum, but even he was too poor to do much more than that. So your grandmother and I sat down together and tried to figure out what we could do for *parnassah*. We were destitute immigrants. All we had were the clothes on our backs, and we were determined to keep Torah and *mitzvos* no matter what. That meant no jobs that required working on Shabbos, which, as you’ve heard about, was a big challenge then.”

Zeidy’s gaze was sober. Levi gave a serious nod.

“We decided to open a tailor shop,” Zeidy continued. “Both Bubby and I were very capable at sewing and Uncle Shmiel’s wife, Zelda, offered to lend us her sewing machine. We planned and planned and we became very excited about the idea. One night, at the height of our planning, I met a good friend of mine from the *Alter Heim*, the Old Country, back in Poland. His name was Avremel. Avremel and I had grown up together; we’d been through a lot together.” Zeidy sighed, remembering. Levi waited.

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*Objective: Students will learn by example how positive communication has the power to transform people’s moods and attitudes.*

# Reviewing the Evidence

Week 2: Day 2

## The Comment

CONTINUED

it would cut me to shreds!”

Zeidy paused and Levi held his breath.

“Well, my Uncle Shmiel was standing right next to me and before I could stop him, he burst out and said, ‘Hershel’s planning to open a tailor shop! They got a little shop right by the butcher!’ I felt my heart stop. I saw Avremel’s eyes open wide and his mouth get tight, and I just *knew*—I just *knew*—that there was some kind of comment coming. A comment that might destroy my entire business. Because you know, Levi, the wrong kind of comment can destroy anything and everything in its path.”

Levi nodded thoughtfully.

“So what happened, Zeidy?” he asked eagerly. “What did he say?”

“Avremel took a moment and then he smiled. ‘A *sach mazel*, Hershel!’ he said to me. ‘It should be in a *mazel’ digeh shuh*—it should be very successful!’” Zeidy beamed. “I can’t even tell you how I felt when I heard his words. A mile high!”

“Wow!” Levi’s throat felt tight. “That really is a nice thing to say.”

“Sometimes I think back to that day,” Zeidy mused. “I wonder if Avremel struggled with himself to say something nice to me instead of letting fly with one of his sarcastic remarks. I know that it was because of his reaction that I went ahead and opened the store with confidence. If it hadn’t been for his kind words... who knows where I would be today!”

“Oh, my,” Levi said slowly, deep in thought. “Words are pretty powerful stuff. I never realized that before.”

“Oops, I have to go, Zeidy. We’re having a meeting to discuss our project. Thanks for the story; I’ll really try to use my words well. See you later, Zeidy.”







## From the Source



Week 2: Day 3

מִנַּת וְחַיִּים בְּיַד לְשׁוֹן (משלי יח:כא)  
Death and life are in the power of the tongue.

We may think that the words that we say are not important; that once they are said they are gone. In reality, the words we say are very powerful. When we say positive, kind words to others we bring about life; we spread encouragement, happiness and growth. On the other hand, if someone is not careful, the words he says can cause death, discouragement, sadness and destruction.

### Case in Point



#### A Chapter of Hope

Adapted with permission from "Peace Talk", a publication of Mishmeres Hasholom, Israel.

Most people in Shmuly's shoes would have simply given up. But not Shmuly. Shmuly was a fighter, and despite his rare learning disabilities, "giving up" just didn't exist in his dictionary. He worked hard over every letter and syllable until he learned how to read. And, although his classmates always seemed to be miles ahead of him, good-natured Shmuly tried his very best. His friends appreciated his good heart and liked him for who he was. And so Shmuly trudged on, fighting every obstacle, determined to succeed.

He wanted to be a *talmid chacham* and be able to learn on the level of his friends. But what was he to do? Shmuly's *rebbe* saw his struggles and advised him to focus on only one *perak* in Gemara, the first chapter in *Bava Metziah*, to put all his energy into it and to master it well. Shmuly did just that and he felt deep satisfaction. True, it was only one small section of the Gemara, but so what? He was learning Torah, and that's what counted. Shmuly was proud of himself. He worked long and hard to become an expert on the entire *perak*.

Until Mr. Jacobs came along. Mr. Jacobs was well known in Shmuly's community, and one day Shmuly had to approach him about an important matter.

He politely introduced himself.

"Well, well, I've heard about you," Mr. Jacobs said, looking at Shmuly from head to toe. "So tell me, what can you learn?"

Shmuly didn't know what to answer. Why was Mr. Jacobs asking him that? He felt hurt by the

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### Case in Point



*Objective: Students will see a clear demonstration of the long-term effects of positive speech and its ability to overcome negative words.*

Use this powerful story as an opportunity to engage students in a discussion. If students are willing to share, they can present personal examples.



## Case in Point

Week 2: Day 3



### A Chapter of Hope

CONTINUED

insensitive way Mr. Jacobs was speaking to him. "I'm a pro on the first perek in Bava Metzia," he finally said.

Mr. Jacobs found this funny indeed. "A *bachur* knowing just one perek?" he laughed derisively.

The laugh pierced Shmuly's heart like an arrow. That cruel laugh continued to ring in his ears all the time. It destroyed his confidence and robbed him of his drive to learn. He could not bring himself to continue trying so hard. He poured out his heart to his *rebbe*, who sensed his deep pain.

"Let's go to the Steipler," his *rebbe* suggested at last. "We'll ask him for advice and a *brachah*."

Once in the Steipler's room, Shmuly's *rebbe* described to the great *tzaddik* all that had happened to Shmuly. The Steipler requested that he be left alone with Shmuly. When the *rebbe* left the room, the Steipler grasped Shmuly's hand and lovingly said, "I promise that when you sit and learn 'your' perek of Gemara, the *Ribbono shel Olam* leaves the *sefarim* of the *gedolei hador* and listens to your learning. When you open your Gemara to learn, it is more valued by Hashem than all the *shiurim* given in our great yeshivos. Your Torah learning makes you greater than any accomplished *talmid chacham*." Shmuly listened to the Steipler's words carefully.

"Hashem treasures your Torah because you toil so hard to learn it. There is nothing dearer to Hashem than your Torah learning," the Steipler added.

Shmuly practically floated out of the Steipler's home, encouraged like never before. He enthusiastically continued learning.

Shmuly went on to lead a very successful life, with the Steipler's words constantly in his mind. "There is nothing dearer to Hashem than your Torah."

*Words have tremendous power to destroy. They have an even greater power to build.*





# In Action

Week 2: Day 4



## Scenarios

**1** **Chaim:** I wanted to surprise my little brother and put the training wheels on his bike but I couldn't seem to get them to stay in place.

**Aryeh:** Sounds just like you. Some people are just not very handy.

**Hillel:** Sometimes something seems so simple, but it is really much harder when you try doing it. Maybe the screws were rusty.

- How do you think Chaim feels after **Aryeh's** comment? \_\_\_\_\_
- What might be a long-term effect of his comment? \_\_\_\_\_
- How do you think Chaim feels after **Hillel's** comment? \_\_\_\_\_
- What might be a long-term effect of his comment? \_\_\_\_\_

**2** **Yossi:** We worked on our biology display for the Science Fair for hours! You should see how we made our model of the respiratory system. It looks really professional. It came out a bit crooked, but I hope it doesn't matter.

**David:** Of course it matters. But what else could you expect from a bunch of little fifth-graders? It's a shame they let such young grades join our seventh-grade fair. I hope you won't embarrass us.

**Shimon:** Oh, please. You're probably the only ones who notice that it's crooked. People will look at the content, the creativity, and that kind of stuff. Don't worry, it will be a hit. Your group is really talented.

- How do you think Yossi feels after **David's** comment? \_\_\_\_\_
- What might be a long-term effect of his comment? \_\_\_\_\_
- How do you think Yossi feels after **Shimon's** comment? \_\_\_\_\_
- What might be a long-term effect of his comment? \_\_\_\_\_



*Objective: Students will gain a personal understanding of how words affect them. This will empower them to use their words well when communicating with others.*

Call up three students to role-play each scenario. Then ask those students the questions following each scenario. Discuss their answers with the class.



## In Action

Week 2: Day 4



### Scenarios

CONTINUED

**3** **Menachem:** I can't believe it. I studied so hard for this first Mishnayos test, and I did so poorly.

**Tzvi:** What did you expect? Not everyone is brilliant.

**Chaim:** Oh, that must be so disappointing. I think it was an extra-hard test. Don't worry, I'm sure that once you get used to your rebbi's style of testing you'll do fine.

- How do you think Menachem feels after **Tzvi's** comment? \_\_\_\_\_
- What might be a long-term effect of his comment? \_\_\_\_\_
- How do you think Menachem feels after **Chaim's** comment? \_\_\_\_\_
- What might be a long-term effect of his comment? \_\_\_\_\_



# Mission Accomplished

Week 2: Day 5



Write your answers in your Student Log or on the lines below.

**Think of** the positive things you said all week. Write down **one** positive long-term effect that may happen because of a comment you made.

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## Write your own!

Write your own scenario similar to the ones in the activity. Include responses and possible outcomes.

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*Objective: Students will evaluate their progress in using their words well and in monitoring the results of their words.*

You may choose to have the students pair up to work on the second part of the journal entry.

Students should record their answer to the first Journal Question in their Student Log.





בס"ד

## Registration Form

Please complete and fax to: (732) 905-7943 or email to: yesodeihaloshon@gmail.com

**School:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Principal:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_ **City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ **Fax:** (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

***YESODEI HALOSHON** is an outstanding program that uses engaging stories, fun activities, and plenty of motivation to help children uncover the power of positive communication and the building blocks of friendship. (Recommended for grades 4-5)*

Teachers' Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Teachers' Numbers: \_\_\_\_\_

- **Please indicate if each teacher can receive texts or not.**

Please fill out the form below:					
	Item	Description	Price	Quantity	Cost
A	Curriculum	Loose-leaf binder with master copy of the daily program material (for first-time registrants only)	\$250.00	Select: __ boys __ girls	
B	Re-registration	Yearly renewal fee	\$50.00	<b>X</b>	
C	Binders	<b>Additional</b> binders for teachers	\$10.00 per binder		
D	Student Membership*	Includes: •Log Book •Stickers •Prizes •Raffles	\$2.00 per student		
<b>Total Cost:</b>					

\*If you do not know how many students you will have next year, please leave this part blank, and inform us later in the year.

Participating grade/s: \_\_\_\_\_

Total number of participating students: \_\_\_\_\_

I agree to pay the fees listed above. Invoices will be sent when registration is complete.

I agree to have our school name publicized with other Yesodei Haloshon schools.

Program Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

