

New Interactive Siddur by Davidson Graduate



Alex Weinberg, a 2006 graduate of the distance learning program of The Davidson School (master's degree in Jewish Education), published [Siddur Sim Shalom Remix 2.0](#), an interactive siddur designed for religious school students and Ramah campers. Alex, who is director of Congregational Education at Chizuk Amuno Congregation in Baltimore, Maryland, and gives workshops on teaching tefillah to Jewish educators, describes his goals for the siddur and how he created it.

Prayer must be relevant, meaningful, and personal to impact the Jewish identity of our youth—no small task. *Siddur Sim Shalom Remix 2.0 (SSSR 2.0)* aims to make prayer close and accessible to the synagogue's tween population: grades five to eight. Through immersive, engaging, interactive experiences in prayer environments, *SSSR 2.0* encourages them to develop tangible metaphors for theological concepts and to create a personalized and authentic prayer experience that can be transported to the sanctuary. *SSSR 2.0* gives students the tools to pray with their community and to access concepts, personal language, and an approach to the text that promotes fun and meaningful prayer experiences.

The gatefolded siddur pages are full of exercises that allow students to connect to *tefillah*(prayer) on a deeper level. Each page has guide questions, a road map for students to understand where the prayer is located in a service, interactive exercises where students design everything from T-shirts to webpages to campaign slogans based on the theme of the prayer, and even a title bar where the students give a title to each prayer page. Each of these exercises allows the students to personalize the prayer experience, making the *tefillah* their own.

The initial concept for *SSSR 2.0* began about ten years ago as a final project for a *tefillah*class I took with Dr. Steven Brown, previously dean of The Davidson School and now head of school at the Jack M. Barrack Hebrew Academy outside of Philadelphia. I decided to re-create and reinvent the *Siddur Sim Shalom* and got permission from the Rabbinical Assembly to use the original *Siddur Sim Shalom* pages to create *SSSR 2.0* for my master's thesis. Together with Dr. Brown, who was my adviser on the project, I created a siddur that explores about seventy prayers from the weekday *Shaharit*, Torah, *Shabbat Shaharit*, and *Musaf* services and incorporates *iyun tefillah* (learning about prayer), skill development, and concept-application opportunities.

Using the 4MAT structure of curricular design, it combines discussion with written, creative, and interactive experiences. The project has a 4MAT lesson plan for each page of the siddur. Also used in the Project Etgar curriculum (a joint project of United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism and the Melton Research Center for Jewish Education at The Davidson School, 4MAT addresses multiple learning types in a concept-based learning environment.

Siddur Sim Shalom ROMEX 2.0

Alex
Weinberg



סידור
שים
שלום
ROMEX 2.0
מתנה רמה

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SSSR 2.0 is being used in about twenty synagogues and Ramah camps throughout the United States and has been recognized in numerous newspapers throughout the country.

For more information, contact Alex Weinberg at aweinberg@chizukamuno.org or visit www.alexweinberg.org.

http://www.jtsa.edu/Documents/pagedocs/TorahFund/2010_2011_tf_guide.pdf