

# SYNAGOGUE LIBRARIES

## Reading Motivation Ideas for Synagogue Libraries

**Margot S. Berman**

*Temple Beth Am  
Miami, FL*

### Introduction

The synagogue librarian's contact with students in an after-school and weekend setting is limited by the need to share enrichment periods, which compete for non-classroom time. In addition, especially if the school is a large one, the librarian rarely has an opportunity to discern each student's reading skill and interests. How to forge a connection between books and readers is the focus of the program ideas which follow. The reward-beyond-the-reading is the favored approach.

We all know that synagogue librarians are not only receptive to, but are also anxiously seeking, reading program designs. The plans which follow should serve as a stimulus for the future exchange of additional successful reading motivation ideas. Send your proven schemes to the editor; your colleagues will be grateful.

Finally, there is that old saw, "You can lead a horse to water but you cannot make him drink." True, but your job is to "Make Him Thirsty."

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*Margot S. Berman is the Librarian of Temple Beth Am in Miami, Florida, and the Contributing Editor for SYNAGOGUE LIBRARIES of Judaica Librarianship.*

### Helping Books Compete with Technology in a Congregational Setting

**Ralph R. Simon**

*Temple Emanu El  
University Heights, OH*

The traditional role of the congregational librarian is to encourage youngsters to become readers of Jewish books, and, in a technology-oriented world, librarians need—more than ever—to develop methods for motivating youngsters to read and love Jewish children's books. Even though contemporary Jewish children's literature is of better literary and artistic quality than was formerly the case, and recently published Bible stories and books about Jewish customs, folklore, and tradition offer more diversity and are more appealing than earlier publications, it is simply not enough to place

a volume on the shelf and forget about it. We have to use various techniques—from arranging and displaying books in unique and attractive ways, to direct involvement of young readers—in order to develop and sustain their appetite for Jewish children's books.

#### Physical Arrangement

In our synagogue library, we have used what might best be described as a "merchandising" technique to display books. Approximately a dozen books are stood up or

