

A 'modern Jewish mom' offers hope to harried households on Shabbat

by Ron Kaplan
NJJN Staff Writer

Author and Web site host Meredith Jacobs says children are often the "reentry point to synagogue and Jewish life."

For some women, however, reestablishing that connection can be a daunting proposition, especially with activities that pull the family in different directions on the weekend — and Shabbat.

With her new book, *The Modern Jewish Mom's Guide to Shabbat* (Harper Collins), Jacobs hopes to alleviate some of that confusion and frustration.

The *Guide*, set to hit bookstores Feb. 20 — the release was delayed because of problems in some of the Hebrew text — is an offshoot of Jacobs' series of workshops for women about Shabbat which, in turn, came out of her Web site, ModernJewishMom.Com.

Jacobs, who worked in public relations before her kids were born, was a stay-at-home mom. Although she writes a monthly column on family and parenting for the *Baltimore Jewish Times*, she never thought she would write a book, especially not a book about Shabbat.

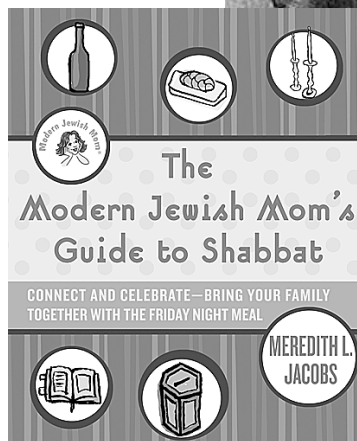
Her Web site casts a wide net. Among the contributors are Rachel Sarah, a Jewish single mom who writes about finding a connection with other single friends and their children to create a sense of family with people who aren't actually related; Jacobs' sister, Jennifer Kagnoff, who considers "What would a Jewish mom do?" in an advice column; and their mother, Ellen Levin, who writes a column from a *bubbe's* point of view.

"Connection" is an important concept to Jacobs. Shabbat, she says, connects "every Jewish woman before you and every Jewish woman yet to come."

"I was one of those kids who loved Hebrew school," she said. "Very much a [United Synagogue Youth] kid," something she is trying to instill in her children, Sofie, 10, and Jules, eight.

"Our kids are growing up in a very violent, scary time. How do you find the time to sit down and talk to them about basic values? We use Shabbat and the *parsha* as that vehicle," she said.

"More and more, we are looking to put meaning into our families' lives and give our children a sense of place in the world," she writes in the introduction to the *Guide*. "Although we want our children to be successful and want them to have all they desire, we also want to give them knowledge of something deeper, something



larger than themselves and more meaningful than the material things they acquire."

The *Guide* includes suggestions on how to create a *shalom bayit* (peaceful home) on Friday evenings, recipes, topics for discussions, projects, and summaries of the weekly *parashot*. And, because teenagers have their own agendas, she devotes a chapter to helping them maintain a connection to family and to Judaism.

Jacobs acknowledges the difference between having Friday night dinner and becoming *shomer* Shabbat when conflicting schedules make it all but impossible to engage in a formal sit-down dinner every week.

"Find that time to bless your children," Jacobs said. Even if the meal consists simply of pizza, "let your children and spouse know how much they mean to you. Too often in our modern world, we need to find those moments to say, 'I love you.' You can't just assume that people know how you feel about them." ■

Ron Kaplan can be reached at RKaplan@njewishnews.com.

'Our kids are growing up in a very violent, scary time. How do you find the time to sit down and talk to them about basic values? We use Shabbat and the *parsha* as that vehicle.'

FAQs on the HPV vaccine for women and girls

This week, the discussion about the vaccine against Human Papillomavirus (HPV), which may lead to cervical cancer, made its way onto the news. To help readers understand the importance and value of the vaccine for girls and women, Hadassah's Department of Women's Health and Advocacy has compiled these FAQs:

Q: What is the HPV vaccine?

A: It is a vaccine that protects against the four types of HPV that are responsible for approximately 70 percent of all cervical cancers and 90 percent of genital warts. The HPV vaccine is not a substitute for routine cervical cancer screening; it will not treat or cure HPV.

In addition to the vaccine, your health professional has a new tool available to help diagnose HPV infection in combination with the Pap test.

- The Pap test screens for abnormal cells in the cervix that may turn into cancer over time, and doctors recommend that women have their first Pap by age 21 or within three years after first intercourse.
- The HPV test is used to show the presence or absence of genetic DNA material from HPV. An HPV test is recommended for screening women 30 and over at the same time they get their Pap test. Women under age 30 will get an HPV test if their Pap test results are inconclusive.

Q: Who should get the vaccine?

A: The vaccine was approved by the Food and Drug Administration in 2006 and made available for use in girls and women between the ages of nine and 26. It may also help protect people who have one type of HPV from becoming infected with another type.

Q: Why is it important for girls and young women to be immunized?

A: To safeguard their health by protecting them against 70 percent of all cervical cancers caused by high-risk types of HPV and 90 percent of genital warts.

Q: Is it likewise important for Jewish girls and young women to be immunized?

A: Jewish girls and young women are included in the population for which the FDA has recommended the HPV vaccine. The old wives' tale that Jewish women do not get cervical cancer is false. HPV is very common and does not distinguish among race, religion, ethnicity, or culture.

Q: How can Hadassah help?

A. Hadassah recognizes the HPV vaccine as a breakthrough in the prevention of cervical cancer and that 2006 marked the first time the FDA approved a vaccine that prevents cancer. Hadassah recommends that you have a frank and open discussion with a health professional to make certain it is right for you or your loved one. For more information visit: www.hadassah.org/womenshealth, www.cdc.gov, www.fda.gov, www.womenshealth.gov, or www.niaid.nih.gov or call Hadassah's Department of Women's Health and Advocacy at 212-303-8094.

Torah haiku

by Ron Kaplan

Mishpatim

An eye for an eye?
Tooth for tooth? Works out well for
doctors and dentists.

Your Turn

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