

Full-Year Integrated Chumash and Navi Curriculum

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To Whom This May Concern,

I am thrilled to share with you the full-year integrated Chumash and Navi curriculum that I implemented in my 8th grade class at Bi-Cultural Day School during the 2016-2017 academic year. Please take a look at this document as well as the other attachments when indicated. If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at etrombka@bcds.org.

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Part 1:

Inspiration for Joint Curriculum

During the summer of 2016, I struggled as I prepared to teach the book of Devarim (Deuteronomy) for the first time. Devarim primarily consists of Moshe's final speech to Bnei Yisrael about one month before his death. Naturally, the first thing I did was go through Devarim and pick the topics I found to be integral and that I could anticipate speaking to my students (see attachment for Devarim topics I had planned to cover). The topics were fairly mainstream and did not significantly differ from what previous teachers had taught. However, as I envisioned teaching these topics, I was able to foresee a lot of obstacles.

The first issue I found was that Moshe's speech includes very little narrative and is mostly laws. Generally, students express greater interest towards narratives than they do towards laws, so the loss of a story line would be a challenge. Secondly, the laws mentioned in Devarim are generally very short, meaning that a unit would often revolve around a single verse or two. Teaching so many short units was not ideal as it meant that roughly every week we would be beginning something new. Thirdly, and perhaps most difficult, was the way the laws in Devarim were arranged in Devarim. Often, there is no obvious or logical connection between one law and the law that follows it.¹

I wanted to find a way to tackle all three of these challenges. I solved the third difficulty first, deciding to teach Devarim thematically and not in the order in which they appeared in Devarim. Teaching these laws out of order did not bother me, since all of Devarim took place in just over a month, so at worst I would be sacrificing a few weeks of chronology in order to create a smoother transition between topics. However, I would still be left with many stand alone laws and no narrative attached.

Finally a solution came to me. My students would be learning Melachim Alef (Kings I) in Navi (see attachment for Melachim Alef chapters I had planned to cover). Why not try to thematically sync the Devarim curriculum to the Melachim Alef one? Melachim Alef could serve as a backbone narrative while anchoring the stand alone Devarim topics on a larger scale. It was worth a shot.

¹ For example, I just could not imagine teaching students the laws regarding helping the fallen donkey of a friend (Devarim 22:4), followed by the prohibition of women wearing men's garments (Devarim 22:5), followed by the mitzvah of sending away a mother bird (22:6-7) followed by the laws of putting a fence around a balcony (22:8).

Part 2:

Purpose of Devarim

One might wonder if linking Devarim to Melachim Alef is taking Devarim out of context. Perhaps Devarim should be learned in relation to itself and not another book. I would like to argue the opposite, that Devarim was intended to be studied outside of itself, with other books, specifically narratives, in mind.

The Ramban (Nachmanides) is famous for giving each book of the Bible a name and names Devarim “Mishna Torah.”² Translating the phrase “Mishna Torah” however, can be tricky. Often, people understand the phrase to mean a repeat of the Torah. However, Rabbi Menachem Leibtag, one of the leading experts of Tanach today, argues that it cannot mean a repeat of the Torah.³ He explains how significant parts of the Torah such as the stories of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs among much else are left out. Therefore, “Mishna Torah” cannot mean a repeat of the Torah. Rabbi Leibtag then continues to claim that the name “Mishna Torah” teaches that Devarim is a book that includes things “that need to be repeated, every day.”⁴

In other words, the laws and lessons of Devarim relate directly to day to day life! What better way to demonstrate that than to look at Devarim and connect its lessons to future stories. It was my hope that doing so would drive home the message that Devarim’s messages are alive and relevant even after the final verses of the book.

² See Ramban’s introduction to Devarim

³ <http://tanach.org/dvarim/dvarim/dvarintr.htm>

⁴ *ibid*

Part 3:

Ten Units of Curriculum

Below, please find the ten units of the joint Devarim-Melachim Alef curriculum. For each unit, I will briefly explain the sections in Devarim as well as the chapters in Melachim Alef and call attention to the connection between them. Please note that Unit 1 and Unit 10 are Devarim only and do not connect to Melachim Alef.

Unit 1:

This unit serves as an introduction to Devarim. We began with the Ramban cited above which identifies Devarim as “Mishna Torah” as well as the Rabbi Leibtag article previously discussed. We then studied the first couple of verses of Devarim (1:1-4) which identify the time and place of Devarim as well as Moshe’s subtle rebuke to Bnei Yisrael.⁵ We then analyzed Moshe’s prayer to enter Israel (3:23-29) and the repetition of the Ten Commandments and Moshe’s role as a middleman between Bnei Yisrael and G-d (5:6-30).

Unit 2:

<u>Book</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Section</u>
Devarim	It is Not in the Sky	30:11-14
Devarim	Cities of Refuge	4:41-43+19:1-13
Melachim Alef	David Aging, Adoniyahu	Chapter 1

It is Not in the Sky (Devarim 30: 11-14): In these verses, Moshe tells Bnei Yisrael that there is a Mitzvah that is not in the sky or across the ocean. Rather the Mitzvah is close to them at all times. While the Torah does not tell us what Mitzvah Moshe is referring to, Ramban, as well as other commentaries, identify this Mitzvah as Teshuva (repentance).⁶ We then studied the laws of Teshuva which included the writings of Rambam⁷ (Maimonides) who outlined the steps

⁵ There were a number of times throughout the year in which I followed the “Ayeka” model in order to make the learning more relevant and personal to the students. I will indicate a few of those times throughout this summary. With regard to this unit, I challenged the students to reflect on when they give rebuke to others they give in their lives and how their lives would be different if they improved in this trait and brainstormed with the class different ways in which they could improve on this trait.

⁶ Devarim 30:30

⁷ Mishna Torah Hilchot Teshuva 2:1

of complete Teshuva, teaching that the highest level of Teshuva is when a person is in a situation in which he sinned before, but does not sin again.⁸

Cities of Refuge (Devarim 4:41-43+19:1-13): Here, we learned the laws regarding the six cities of refuge Bnei Yisrael were to set up. These cities were designated for people who accidentally murdered. The victim's family has the right to take revenge on the accidental murderer, but if the murderer flees to a city of refuge, he may safely live there without fear of being killed.

Chapter 1 of Melachim Alef tells of final days of King David. He is cold, and needs the help of a young and beautiful girl named Avishag to lie on him in order to keep warm. The text stresses that despite Avishag laying over David, nothing sexual took place between them. **This connects to what we learned regarding Teshuva.** One year before, the students learned the story of David and Batsheva in which David sinned upon seeing a beautiful woman. Although he repented at the time, when put in a similar situation he does not act inappropriately, demonstrating he truly regretted the mistake he made and reaching the highest level of Teshuva we saw in the Rambam.

Meanwhile, as Avishag warms David, David's son Adoniyahu assumes the throne. However, Adoniyahu had no justification for doing so as G-d has promised that a different son of David, Shlomo, would be the next king. The prophet Natan, along with Shlomo's mother Batsheva, devise a plan to allow David to verify that Shlomo will be his successor; their plan works and David proclaims Shlomo the next king.

Upon hearing that David has declared Shlomo his successor, Adoniyahu fears that Shlomo's first step will be to kill him, as he had threatened Shlomo's reign before it even began. To protect himself, Adoniyahu grabs onto the corners of an altar. Many commentaries explain that Adoniyahu knew that he could not be killed when touching an altar.⁹ **Similar to the concept of a city of refuge**, the altar served as a safety zone. Shlomo then pardons Adoniyahu on the condition that he not take any wrong steps in the future.

<u>Book</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Section</u>
Devarim	What does G-d Ask	10:12-13
Melachim Alef	David's final request	Chapter 2

⁸ Other highlights of the Teshuva unit included discussing how Teshuva must be done through one's mouth and heart. We also looked at the story of Rav Elazar ben Durdaya (Gemara Avodah Zara 17b) who sinned his entire life, but did sincere Teshuva at his final moments and was given a place in the next world. This sparked a classwide debate as to whether or not it ever becomes too late to do Teshuva.

⁹ For example, see Ralbag 1:50

What does G-d Ask (Devarim 10:12-13): In these verses, Moshe pleads with Bnei Yisrael to follow G-d's ways. We read: *"what does the Lord your G-d ask of you? Just to fear the Lord your G-d, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord your G-d with all your heart and with all your soul; to keep the commandments of the Lord, and His statutes, which I command you this day."* It seems like this petition, though short in words is large in actuality and an appeal to keep all Mitzvot. We then discussed how Moshe could frame such a big request as a small one.¹⁰

Chapter 2 of Melachim Alef begins with David speaking to Shlomo. He tells him *"keep the charge of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, and His commandments, and His ordinances, and His testimonies."*¹¹ The words of David before his death **echoes those of Moshe** as they are both plea before death that all of G-d's laws be followed. David continues to tell Shlomo all the people he should reward and seek retribution from based on how they acted towards David during his life. The chapter concludes with Adoniyahu coming with what he calls "just one request"¹² which is to take Avishag as a wife.¹³ Shlomo considers this request treason, and orders Adoniah's death.

Unit 3:

<u>Book</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Section</u>
Devarim	Pursue Justice	16:18-20 + 1:16-17
Melachim Alef	Shlomo's Wisdom to Judge	Chapter 3

Pursue Justice (16:18-20+1:16-17): In these sections Bnei Yisrael are given the commandment to appoint judges among themselves. These judges are expected to judge cases fairly, without any favoritism or bribes. We use these verses as a springboard to learn the laws of judges and courts with the common theme of justice and fairness guiding the laws.

¹⁰ To begin doing this, we looked at the Gemara which teaches that for Moshe, keeping the laws was a small thing. This then spiraled into further study of commentators such as Rav Hirsch who explains that Moshe did not realize fearing G-d did not come easily to others. We then continued to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of having a leader who is so spiritually above the people he leads.

¹¹ Melachim Alef 2:3

¹² Melachim Alef 2:16

¹³ Although this was not my intention in connecting, the kids also identified a further connection between these units as both Moshe and Adoniyahu present their respective requests as a relatively small when in fact they are quite significant.

In Chapter 3 of Melachim Alef, G-d appears to Shlomo in a dream and offers him anything he wants. G-d credits Shlomo with asking for a “listening heart”¹⁴ to appropriately judge Bnei Yisrael. The chapter continues with Shlomo’s wisdom being put to the test as he faces two women and one baby, each claiming the baby belonged to her. In his wisdom, Shlomo is able to determine which woman is the mother. **The connection to Devarim is clear**, we are commanded to judge fairly and Shlomo asks for wisdom to do just that and is able to do so even in the most difficult case.

Unit 4:

<u>Book</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Section</u>
Devarim	Centrality of Jerusalem	11:26-16:18 (Select Sections)
Melachim Alef	Building and Dedicating the Temple	Chapters 5-6, 8

Centrality of Jerusalem (11:26-16:18, Select Sections): Within these chapters, there is the recurring phrase of “*The place which G-d will choose.*” These words, referring to Jerusalem appears over 15 times, stressing the essential role of Jerusalem in core aspects of Judaism (sacrifices, eating tithed produce, getting judged by high court, etc). We also discussed the value of having one place that unifies Bnei Yisrael and why Jerusalem was the perfect place to do just that.

However, most of the laws relating to Jerusalem only take effect with the construction of a Temple. **In Melachim Alef Chapters 5-8** Shlomo builds the First Temple. We studied the materials Shlomo used, the vessels he made and the dedication speech he gave to Bnei Yisrael upon completing it. **From that point on, Bnei Yisrael were expected to follow all the laws stipulated in Devarim.**

Unit 5:

<u>Book</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Section</u>
Devarim	The Strength and Might of My Hand	8:1-20
Melachim Alef	Beginning of Shlomo’s Downfall	Chapter 10

¹⁴ Melachim Alef 3:9

The Strength and Might of My Hand (Devarim 8:1-20): In this section, Moshe warns Bnei Yisrael that although G-d will provide for them once they enter Israel, they should remember to acknowledge G-d for their success lest they say “*My power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth.*”¹⁵ We then envisioned the dangers of success if it is not attributed to G-d.¹⁶

Chapter 10 of Melachim Alef begins with Shlomo at the pinnacle of his reign. The Temple he built and his wisdom has spread world wide. Shlomo is visited by the Queen of Sheba who is impressed by his knowledge and blesses G-d. Reading this however, raises a red flag as the Queen of Sheba isn’t the one who should be acknowledging G-d for Shlomo’s success, it should be Shlomo demonstrating that he was **unable to avoid what Moshe had warned in Devarim.**

<u>Book</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Section</u>
Devarim	Don’t Add to Mitzvot	4:2
Devarim	Fence Around Balconies	22:8
Melachim Alef	Shlomo’s Downfall	Chapter 11

Don’t Add to Mitzvot (Devarim 4:2): This verse teaches that one should not add or subtract from any Mitzvah. This means one should not do more or less than what G-d has commended. I then use this as an opportunity to expose the class to the concept of a stringencies and leniencies and how that can be different than adding to or subtracting from a Mitzvah. We then discussed how at times stringencies are important in order to “*put a fence around the Torah*”¹⁷ meaning that whatever lines the Torah does not allow us to cross, we should draw the line a bit before it in order to be completely sure the line will not be crossed.

Fence Around Balconies (Devarim 22:8): We are taught that a fence must be placed over a balcony or roof. We discuss the requirements of these fences and how one of the reasons a fence must be place is so that a person can be as careful as possible in order to ensure nothing bad happens on his property.

It is in Perek 11 of Melachim Alef that Shlomo’s kingship falls. One of the reasons why is because he married many foreign women¹⁸ who were bad influences on him. The Torah had

¹⁵ Devarim 8:17

¹⁶ This was one of the sections in which I integrated soulful education asking students to examine how often they attribute part of their success to G-d and what they could do in order to become a person who sees G-d’s hand more.

¹⁷ Mishna Avot 1:1

¹⁸ With his wives totaling to 700 wives and 300 concubines (Melachim Alef 11:3)

warned that a king not have too many wives as they will stray his heart.¹⁹ Regarding this the Gemara explains that Shlomo saw the prohibitions of too many wives as a mere precaution and said to himself “*I will have many wives, but will not stray.*”²⁰ **This ties directly back to what we saw in Devarim** regarding stringencies and putting a fence just to be certain nothing bad happens. As a result of Shlomo’s actions, G-d tells him that his son Rechavam will lose a bulk of the kingship. G-d then sends a prophet to a man named Yeravam, telling him that he would take ten tribes of Israel, leaving Rechavam with only two.

Unit 6:

<u>Book</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Section</u>
Devarim	Asking Questions	17:8-11
Melachim Alef	Taking Bad Tax Advice	Chapter 12
Devarim	Laws of Going to War	20:1-20

Asking Questions (Devarim 17:8-11): These verses describe a situation in which a disagreement arises between two people. In order to solve it, they must travel to Jerusalem where they will be judged. The Torah is clear; no matter what is ruled, they must follow it.²¹

Laws of Going to War (Devarim 20:1-20): These verses teach the protocol that should be done in Israel before a war. We see that there are times when individuals should not go to war, for example, men who recently gotten married or built a new house and discuss the reasoning behind those restrictions.

In Melachim Alef Perek 12, Rechavam begins his reign over Israel with the people requesting lower taxes. Unsure what to do, he seeks advice from those who advised his father and is told he should lower the taxes in order to win his people’s allegiance. Rechavam however, does not heed the advice of the experts and counsels with his childhood friends who tell him that

¹⁹ Devarim 17:17

²⁰ Sahnedrin 21b

²¹ We continue to study how even if it becomes certain that what was ruled is wrong it must be followed for the sake of giving authority to those who rule and for the sake of consistency. We conclude this section with the story in the Gemara (Rosh HaShana 25a) of Rabban Gamliel and Rabi Yehoshua. The two dispute when Yom Kippur will fall. Since Rabban Gamliel was the leader, the date was observed according to him. When the day came that Rabi Yehoshua was sure was Yom Kippur, he went outside with his money and walking stick in order to demonstrate he was not observing the day he knew to be correct for the sake of consistency among Israel.

I also used these verses as a springboard for soulful education by allowing the students to reflect on if and when they feel comfortable asking others for advice and taking into consideration what they have to say, realizing that the knowledge of this world is greater than they are.

he should raise taxes higher than Shlomo ever did. Unwisely, Rechavam chooses that advice, leaving ten tribes of Bnei Yisrael so unhappy that they anoint Yeravam as their king, tearing the kingdom in two. **While Devarim stressed the importance of listening to the ruling of leaders**, Rechavam does just the opposite which ends up costing him and his kingdom greatly.

The chapter concludes with Rechavam wanting to wage war on Yeravam, but G-d tells him not to fight. This time, Rechavam makes the right choice and takes G-d's advice. **Similar to what we studied in Devarim regarding wars**, we see that there are times when going to war might seem like the correct thing to do, when in fact one should not fight.

Unit 7:

<u>Book</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Section</u>
Devarim	False Prophet	13:2-6
Devarim	Kashrut	14:3-21
Devarim	Broken-Neck Cow	21:1-9
Melachim Alef	The Man of G-d and the False Prophet	Chapter 13
Melachim Alef	Fall of Yeravam and Rechavam	Chapter 14

False Prophets (Devarim 13:2-6): In this section, G-d warns Bnei Yisrael that there will be people who will falsely claim G-d spoke to them and told them to worship other gods. G-d stresses that these people should not be listened to no matter how many signs and wonders they might perform.

Kashrut (Devarim 14:3-21): Here, we examined the laws relating to Kashrut including what does and does not make certain animals Kosher. We also recognized that while there may be many health benefits to following the laws of Kashrut, those are only benefits and not reasons as ultimately, we keep Kashrut because G-d told us to.

The Broken-Neck Cow (Devarim 21:1-9): These verses describe a case in which a body is found anonymously murdered and unburied between two cities. To atone for this death, the elders of the city take a cow and break it's neck²² declaring that they did not intend to let this person to die and pray that G-d forgive the nation for allowing this death to take place.

²² This breaking of a neck is done to a cow which has never carried a load before which symbolizes a loss of potential. So too, it is understood that the person who died still had what to contribute to the world, but because of his untimely death, he was unable to accomplish that which he was capable of.

In Chapter 13 of Melachim Alef, G-d sends a messenger known as “The Man of G-d” to tell Yeravam he has been acting against G-d’s ways. Upon delivering that as a result Yeravam’s kingdom will fall, Yeravam challenges and threatens The Man of G-d. The Man of G-d then paralyzes Yeravam’s hand until the Man of G-d prays that his hand be returned.

The chapter then follows The Man of G-d who is invited by a false prophet over for a meal. The Man of G-d declined the invitation as he was under an eating prohibition from G-d. The false prophet responded that he too was a prophet and that G-d had instructed him that he could in fact eat. The man of G-d believes this and joins him for a meal. **This connected to our false prophet unit** since we spoke about how we should always use our judgement to determine whether or not someone is a true prophet. The Man of G-d knew that G-d did not want him to eat, so he should have known better than to believe this man. **In addition, similar to the idea of Kashrut**, the Man of G-d was under an eating restriction, as we are when keeping Kashrut.

Unhappy that The Man of G-d disobeyed him, G-d took away his prophecy and gave it to the previously false prophet. Through him, G-d criticized His messenger for eating and said that he would die on his way back home. Sure enough, as the man returned to home, he was attacked and killed by a lion. The previously false prophet hears about this and then travels to the body and buries it. **Like the laws of the Broken-Neck Cow**, we see care being taken for a dead body left on the side of a road.

Melachim Alef Perek 14 tells about Yeravam’s son who becomes ill. Yeravam sends his wife disguised to a true prophet who tells her their son will soon die, which soon comes true. We are then taken back to the rule of Rechavam in which everyone is committing idolatry. G-d then brought the king of Egypt to raid Jerusalem and take many of the treasures from the Temple.

Unit 8:

<u>Book</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Section</u>
Devarim	First Paragraph of Shema	6:4-10
Devarim	Second Paragraph of Shema	11:13-22
Devarim	Eliyahu Stops the Rain	Chapter 17
Melachim Alef	Eliyahu on Mt. Carmel	Chapter 18
Melachim Alef	Eliyahu on the Run	Chapter 19

First Paragraph of Shema (Devarim 6:4-10): Although most students have been saying these verses in prayer for years, teaching Devarim provides the opportunity to examine these verses in a more in depth level. Shema begins with what is perhaps the thesis statement of the Jewish people as we declare “*Hear Israel, Hashem is our G-d, Hashem is One.*”²³ The verses continue to explain how one should love G-d and the importance of Torah and how it should be taught to one’s children.

Second Paragraph of Shema (Devarim 11:13-22): One of the major themes of these verses is reward and punishment. In this section, G-d declares that if Bnei Yisrael keep the laws there will be rain and the land will be fruitful. However the inverse is true as well; if Bnei Yisrael do not keep the laws and worship other G-d’s there will be no rain or produce.

In Melachim Alef Chapter 17 the prophet Eliyahu confronts the corrupt King Achav and tells him that because of the idolatry taking place, there will be no rain until he says otherwise. This prediction comes true, **an exact fulfillment of the second paragraph of Shema** which stipulated there would be no rain if Bnei Yisrael did not listen. Achav got angry at Eliyahu for this so, Eliyahu hid by a stream for safety where he was given food by ravens. From there Eliyahu went to a place called Tzarfat where he met a widow struggling under the drought. Eliyahu assured her there would be enough flour and oil and there was. The woman’s child then dies and Eliyahu revives him.

By Melachim Alef Chapter 18, the drought has lasted for three years. Eliyahu challenges the worshippers of idolatry to a showdown on Mt. Carmel. Both Eliyahu and the followers of idolatry prepare sacrifices. When only Eliyahu’s sacrifice is accepted, all those watching declare twice “*Hashem is the true G-d*”²⁴ **thereby echoing the main theme in the first paragraph of Shema.** It was after this recognition and declaration that the sky prepared to finally rain again supporting what was predicted in the second paragraph of Shema.

Although Eliyahu had demonstrated that his G-d was the true G-d, we see in **Melachim Alef Chapter 19** his life is still in jeopardy. Achav’s wife Izevel wants to kill Eliyahu, so he runs away and asks G-d to take his life. After forty days of traveling he arrives at Mt. Sinai. It is there that Eliyahu is taught that the way to act towards the sinning Bnei Yisrael is not in an overly zealous manner but rather softly.

²³ Devarim 6:4

²⁴ Melachim Alef 18:39

Unit 9:

<u>Book</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Section</u>
Devarim	Paying Poor People	24:14-15
Devarim	Using Honest Weights and Measures	25:13-16
Melachim Alef	Navot's Vineyard	Chapter 21

Paying Poor People (Devarim 24:14-15): Here we are commanded to pay a poor worker on the day he works. This is because a poor person is dependant on that money and to withhold it from him would be unfair and taking advantage of someone not as well off.

Using Honest Weights and Measures (Devarim 25:13-16): In these verses, we are commanded to never cheat people in our sales. Similar to the section above, the reasoning for such a law is that one should not take advantage of other people.

In Melachim Alef Chapter 21, we see Achav continuing to act corruptly. His neighbor Navot owned a vineyard next to Achav's palace. Achav wanted to purchase the vineyard from him, but Navot did not want to sell it. Angry at Navot, Achav's wife Izevel took action and framed Navot for cursing both G-d and the king, resulting in his death, allowing Achav to inherit the vineyard.²⁵ **Similar to the two previous topics in Devarim,** we see a case in which a person takes advantage of someone below him. Eliyahu then tells Achav that because of his actions he will die and his body will be disgraced.

Unit 10:

In this unit we conclude Devarim by studying its final two chapters. We look at Moshe's blessing to Bnei Yisrael before his death and study different commentaries regarding these blessings and their timing. We continue to explore Moshe's death and who might have written the final eight verses of the Chumash following Moshe's death, and conclude with reflecting back on the life and greatness of Moshe.

²⁵ The law is the property of a person who is executed for treason goes to the king.

Part 4:

Reflections From Last Year's Students

"Having a joint Devarim/Melachim curriculum really enhanced my learning. It was amazing to see how subjects in the Torah connected with Navi. For example, when my class learned about Adoniyah holding onto the altar so Shlomo couldn't kill him, we connected it with [cities of refuge] in Devarim because both related to different types of safety zones"

-S.C. Ma'ayanot High School

"Through all grades in school, we receive a curriculum that is focused, and if it is a text-based class, we learn the chosen sefer in detail. In eighth grade, I had a learning experience that my classmates and I all immediately realized was going to be very different. Learning Devarim by connecting its lessons to other texts (specifically Melachim Alef) changed the way we approached Torah study. I used to always learn the material, study, and then forget much of it after a little while. Learning how Melachim and Devarim connect helped me internalize the messages of the text and learn deeper, more integrated lessons. I started paying attention not only to do well, but also because it was very interesting. It was quite intriguing to see how a passage talking about a Navi with eating restrictions instituted by Hashem could relate to our Kashrut. After learning how to connect the Chumash to Navi I figured out how to connect the two of those to my own life. Eliyahu in Melachim talked to Hashem about a drought for the Jews which is very similar to our second paragraph of Shema. That connection instantly helped me daven (pray) with much more kavana (meaning). Overall, when we learn a text by seeing how it has parallels in many other places, we form a deeper relationship with the material. That is how Eighth Grade Chumash fortunately worked out for me."

-B.R. SAR High School

"Learning Devarim parallel to Melachim made it a lot more interesting because there isn't much action in Devarim. But more importantly it made it easier to learn Devarim because we were able to match it to stories that are harder to forget. Also when we learn something that G-d said in the Torah we can then go and look at examples of how it actually affected the Jews and it makes them more relatable."

-Z.P. SAR High School

"I really enjoyed this curriculum. By learning Devarim in the order of where we were in Melachim, we were able to better understand how these topics affected us, since we got to see how they applied in story form. It also kept class fun and exciting."

-L.S. Westhill High School

Part 5:

Two Exceptions

There were two areas of my Devarim curriculum which I was unable to find a reasonable link in Melachim Alef. The first was the verses of ***Sending Away the Mother Bird (Devarim 22:6-7)*** and ***Remembering the Attack of Amalek (Devarim 25:17-19)***. Rather than forcing those sections into a Melachim Alef chapter, I simply taught Amalek unit right before Shabbat Zachor, in which there is an obligation to hear those verses read.

Regarding *Sending Away the Mother Bird*, I connected it to our Ten Commandments section in Unit 1, since the reward for the fifth commandment, honoring one's parents, and sending away the mother bird is the same, a long life.

Part 6:

Applicability

Although not every school teaches Devarim and Melachim Alef the same year, the system of having a storyline guide the Devarim topics could be applied no matter the book of Navi the students are covering. Furthermore, although I taught the students both Chumash and Navi, this joint curriculum could also have been executed through two teachers as well, with one teaching the Chumash components and the other teaching the Navi ones simultaneously.