

Temple Israel Religious School Curriculum

Vision:

Our vision is to offer our congregants a premier Jewish lifelong learning experience.

Mission:

Our mission is to nurture Jewish identity and values through lifelong learning.

Learning Topics in Every Grade:

- Torah
- Jewish Ethics/Values
- Holidays
- Israel
- Hebrew
- Prayer (*Tefillah*)

Grade Goals: Define the learning objectives for each grade.

Grade Topics: Define the methods by which the learning objectives are achieved.

Kindergarten:

Goals

- Key Bible stories
- Basic Jewish values and symbols
- The concept of *mitzvot (commandments)*, their meaning and influence on our lives today
- Jewish holidays as they occur in the Jewish calendar and begin to identify the ritual objects associated with them
- The connection between the land of Israel and the Jewish people
- The *aleph-bet* and simple nouns in Hebrew

Topics

- Bible stories as they occur in Jewish Calendar (holidays, weekly Torah Portion)
- *Tzedakah (charity)*, mitzvah (commandment) of caring for animals, mitzvah of honoring parents, celebrating Shabbat, responsibility of *Tikun Olam (repairing the world)* and basic Jewish values embodied in the concept of *mitzvot (commandments)*
- Holidays examined from the perspective of rituals as well as the origin and deeper meaning
- Israel as the setting for biblical stories and historical context for Judaism
- Hebrew reading readiness skills by learning to recognize the *aleph-bet*

Methods:

Kindergarten incorporates hands on, experiential learning, as well as **Jewish Music, Prayer, and Art.**

Consecration:

Kindergarten (and 1st Graders who are new to our school this year) are consecrated on *Simchat Torah*. This ceremony celebrates a child's entry into Jewish education. Each child receives a miniature *Torah* scroll with a cover that has been specially decorated by his/her parents.

1st Grade:

Goals

- To become familiar with selected Bible stories as well as the weekly *Torah* portion
- To provide the opportunity to explore questions about God by discovering God's presence in our everyday experiences
- Learn the basic vocabulary for major Jewish holidays and the practices associated with them
- To begin to recite Hebrew blessings associated with food and holidays
- To strengthen an understanding of the importance of Israel for the Jewish people
- To develop Hebrew reading readiness skills by learning to recognize the *aleph-bet*

Topics

- Selected Bible stories: Noah, Joseph and his Brothers, Moses, and others
- Finding God through our everyday experiences
- Celebrations, symbols, rituals, and customs surrounding the Jewish holidays
- Israel as a special place for the Jewish people
- Introduction to more letters of the *alef-bet* and expanded Hebrew holiday and classroom vocabulary

Texts used:

Chai Level 1, The Great Israel Scavenger Hunt, Aleph-Bet Detective, Teach Me Torah 1, Teach Me Torah 2

Tefillot:

Shema, Modeh Ani, prayers for candles (L'hadlik), wine (Borei Pri Hagafen), bread (Hamotzi)

Methods:

1st grade incorporates hands on, experiential learning, as well as **Jewish Music, Prayer, and Art.**

Consecration:

1st Graders who are new to our school this year are consecrated on *Simchat Torah*. This ceremony celebrates a child's entry into Jewish education. Each child receives a miniature *Torah* scroll with a cover that has been specially decorated by his/her parents.

2nd Grade:

Goals

- The importance of the Ten Commandments and how they affect our lives
- To identify *mitzvot (commandments)*, and understand their centrality to Jewish life
- To experience the cycle and flow of the Jewish year and observe each holiday as it occurs throughout the year
- To begin to connect the relationship between Bible stories and key characters, with *Torah* and specific holidays
- To introduce children to learning about Israel, its geography, people and culture
- To begin to write the *aleph-bet*, and continue learning to identify the sounds of the letters
- To continue to expand their Hebrew vocabulary to include words for *mitzvot (commandments)*

Topics

- Ten commandments
- Jewish values and *mitzvot (commandments)*
- Cycle of the Jewish year and the flow of the holidays
- Additional Bible stories
- Continued exploration of God in our world
- Students will learn about Israel's history, language, cities, regions, population, and food
- Hebrew vocabulary through *mitzvot (commandments)*

Texts used:

The Ten Commandments: A Text and Activity Book, Let's Discover the Aleph-Bet, Let's Discover Israel, Bible People: Genesis

Tefillot:

Shema, Modeh Ani, Oseh Shalom, prayers for candles (L'hadlik Ner), wine (Borei Pri Hagafen), bread (Hamotzi)

Methods:

2nd grade incorporates hands on, experiential learning, as well as **Jewish Music, Prayer, and Art.**

3rd Grade: * Starting in 3rd grade, Hebrew language is added on Tuesdays from 4-6 pm *

Goals

- To identify connections between the actions and values in *Torah* and their own lives
- To begin to view *mitzvot* (*commandments*) as an active way through which *mitzvot* connect us to God
- To continue to explore the meaning and relevance of Jewish Holidays as they occur in the calendar
- To formulate and explore increasingly sophisticated questions about God
- To learn about the land of Israel as related to geography
- To continue to practice to identify names and sounds of Hebrew letters in print, with vowels
- To develop Hebrew decoding skills and begin to read Hebrew

Topics

- *Torah* text, stories
- Jewish values, *Gemilut Chasadim* (*acts of loving kindness*), *Tzedakah* (*charity*)
- Holidays, meanings, symbols, traditions
- Cities in Israel, both ancient, and modern, compared
- Hebrew letter and vowel identification in print
- Hebrew decoding skills and sounding out Hebrew (combining letters and vowels)

Texts used:

A Kid's Mensch Handbook: Step by Step to a Lifetime of Jewish values, Chai level 3, I Live in Israel, Shalom Aleph-Bet

Tefillot:

Shema, Baruch Shem Kavod, Modeh Ani, Oseh Shalom, blessings on candles (Ner), wine (Gefen), bread (Hamotzi)

Methods:

3rd grade incorporates hands on, experiential learning, as well as **Jewish Music, Prayer, and Art.**

4th Grade: *Hebrew language is added on Tuesdays from 4-6 pm*

Goals

- To learn and deconstruct the weekly *Torah* portion
- To further develop connections between Jewish values in the *Torah* and their own lives
- To begin to make connections with blessings and spiritual moments in their lives
- To gain an understanding of the land of Israel as a modern country as well as the setting of the Bible
- To continue to develop basic Hebrew reading fluency
- To achieve functional skill at recognizing key Hebrew roots, prefixes and suffixes, and use them to begin to approximate the translation of prayers
- To develop an understanding of the *Shema* as a central prayer in Judaism, the meaning, and purpose of the blessings surrounding the *Shema*
- To begin leading and participating in student led services

Topics

- Weekly *Torah* portion
- The concept that we are partners with God in our role of sustaining God's creation
- To continue to explore Jewish holidays as they occur in the calendar
- Comparing ancient and modern cities in Israel
- Hebrew reading fluency
- Hebrew grammar – identifying roots and understanding general meaning
- The formula and meaning of blessings
- The *Shema* and surrounding blessings
- Following and participating in services

Texts used: *Living Jewish Values 3: Be a Good Friend, Welcome to Israel, Weekly Portion Text*

Tefillot: *Shema, Baruch Shem Kavod, V'Ahavta, Modeh, Oseh, prayers for bread (Hamotzi), wine (Gefen)*

Methods:

4th Grade receives 30 minute lessons weekly from the **Hebrew Educator**, who brings Hebrew language, Israeli music, culture, customs and literature into the classroom. 4th Grade participates in Art with our **Art Specialist**, who integrates the projects with classroom learning.

5th/6th Grade: * Hebrew language is added on Tuesdays from 4-6 pm*

Goals

- To develop an understanding of Torah as a guide to living a life based on Jewish ethics and values
- To be able to identify the traditions, celebrations, symbols, rituals, and customs of Jewish lifecycle events
- To gain an understanding of the structure and content themes of the prayers in the *Amidah*
- To have an historical understanding of the founding of the state of Israel
- To continue to expand their modern Hebrew vocabulary, to be able to read almost anything in Hebrew print (with vowels) with reasonable fluency

Topics

- Great Jewish debates: contemplate Jewish questions throughout history
- Jewish lifecycle events and their connection to God
- The *Amidah*, *Torah* service and concluding prayers
- Founding of the state of Israel and important leaders of the time
- Expanding basic modern Hebrew vocabulary

Texts Used:

Judaism's Great Debates, To Learn is to Do: A Tikun Olam Roadmap, History of the Jewish People, Vol 2: the Birth of Zionism to our Time, Living Jewish Values, Our Shared World

Tefillot:

5th grade: *Shema, Baruch Shem, V'Ahvata, Mi Chamocho, Avot, Oseh, Motzi, Gefen*

6th Grade: *Shema, Baruch Shem, V'Ahavta, Mi Chamocho, Avot, Gevurot, Kedusha*

Methods:

5th and 6th Grades receive 30 minute lessons weekly from the **Hebrew Educator**, who brings Hebrew language, Israeli music, culture, customs and literature into the classroom. 5th and 6th Grades participate in Art with our **Art Specialist**, who integrates the projects with classroom learning.

7th Grade: B'nai Mitzvah Year

Jewish Learning:

- To make connections between Jewish texts and Jewish values demonstrating the relevance to their lives today through *Torah* text
- To examine issues of Jewish identity and priorities in their own lives
- To continue to review and connect the Jewish holidays to their own lives, through creative interpretations and in-depth analysis
- To begin to develop a personal “adult” concept of and perspective on God
- To gain an awareness of key issues, people, and events in American Jewish history
- *Mitzvot* (commandments) *Bein Adam L'Chavero* (between people) and *Bein Adam L'Makom* (between people and God)
- *Tzedakah*, *G'milut Chasadim* (*Acts of Kindness*), *Tikkun olam* (*Repairing the World*)
- Relevant current events through a Jewish lens will be discussed from a fact-based perspective

Hebrew Learning:

- To continue to acquire skills in modern Hebrew including vocabulary, grammar and practical conversational skills while gaining exposure to modern Israeli culture

Prayer (*Tefillah*):

- Examining and experiencing *Tefillah* with Rabbi and Cantor in sanctuary.

Method:

Group learning (*Chavurot*), hands-on, art and multimedia based, experiential learning will be heavily incorporated.

8-9th Grades: Gesher

Part One: The Holocaust, Human Rights, and Hope (*This course is based on the Facing History and Ourselves* curriculum)

- Students will address the issues of personal identity in the context of learning about the Holocaust.
- Through classroom discussions and activities, students will deepen their understanding of the history of hate that led to the Holocaust, increase their awareness of global perspectives on intolerance that exist today, and discover new realities about their own identity.

Part Two: Personal Jewish Identity and Relationship with God

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- What is my responsibility as a Jew to myself and others?
- What does it mean to believe in God? How do I express my belief? What are my questions about God?
- How do other Jews and people of other religions answer universal questions?
- How does Reform Judaism help me to understand my role in the world?

Part Three: Social Justice and Leadership Skills

- Examine modern issues with Jewish texts as a resource in developing critical thinking skills, honing leadership skills, spiritual connections, and a personal code of ethics (write an Ethical Will).
- Engage in a study of Judaism, Christianity and Islam to understand their basic tenets, understanding of God, and how each religion approaches universal questions.
- Engage in a social justice project as a class as they learn more about their identity as Reform Jews, and their responsibility to repair the world.
- Students will travel to New York City in the spring. The class will learn in preparation for this trip experiencing Jewish history.

Specials:

In the second part of the class, a series of *specials* will be offered each semester. *Specials* may include topics such as Hebrew *Ulpan*, Jewish Spiritual Leaders, Jews and Comedy, Jews in Entertainment, the origin of violence through the Jewish lens, the roots of conflict in the Middle East, and others.

Methods: Group learning (*Chavurot*), hands-on, art and multimedia based, experiential learning will be heavily incorporated.

10th Grade: Confirmation

Learning: The Power of Relationships

10th Grade Confirmation curriculum focuses on relationships: relationships with self, peers, community, Judaism, and God. Through text study and experiential activities, students will engage in self reflection to define, and redefine these relationships.

The course concludes on *Erev Shavuot*. Students and the community celebrate Confirmation, as students publicly affirm their dedication to God, *Torah* and the Jewish people, through independently written, self-reflective essays.

Social Justice:

Social justice trip to Washington DC to take part in the *L'Taken* program.

Structure:

Confirmation will be a 10 week course meeting every other week in alternating students' homes, taught by Senior Rabbi.