



Beit Rabban Handbook

2017-2018 / 5777-5778

ויבאו כל איש אשר נשאו לבו

“And everyone who excelled in ability and everyone whose heart was stirred came, bringing to the Lord their offering for the work of the Tent of Meeting and for all its service and for the sacral vestments.” --*RAMBAN on Exodus 35:21*

Welcome to Beit Rabban!

5777-5778 is a year of growth and transition for Beit Rabban.

Our new classroom spaces and growing class sizes prompted us to separate our older classes (Grades 4-7) into four groups, rather than two. For these upper grades, we are trying out a new format of Hebrew Instruction (by level rather than age) and the addition of an elective option at the end of the afternoon. We are also adding a supplementary trope class for students in grade 6. We hope that these changes will help our students to learn in a better environment and will also enable them to bring their unique gifts to our growing and evolving community.

This handbook includes information about the upcoming year, including: an important overview of the whole Mishpachot program, Beit Rabban logistics, curriculum, staff bios, and contact information.

Please read the handbook carefully, as many of your questions that come up throughout the year are addressed here. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

B'shalom,

Cantor Becky Khitrik, Education Coordinator

GENERAL BEIT RABBAN INFORMATION

Arrival & Pick-Up

We hope that parents will make every effort to ensure their child arrives to and is picked up from TBZ on time. We ask that all parents, or other designated adults, sign out their student before leaving the building. An in-person pickup is important not only because it ensures the safety of our students, but it also provides an opportunity for parents to interact with teachers. Students in the Bnei Mitzvah Group are allowed to sign themselves out. A TBZ staff member will remain with the children until all students have been picked up. If you must take your child out of class early, please be sure to send a note with your child. Please make an effort to pick up your child by 6:15. If you know that you are going to be late, please call the TBZ office so that we may make arrangements.

Attendance

Beit Rabban meets from 4-6pm on Wednesdays. We also offer an early dismissal time (5:30) for kindergarteners. Regular attendance is essential in transforming a classroom of children into a community of learners with a quality Jewish education. We realize that some absences are unavoidable. If your child will be out, please contact in advance their teacher and Cantor Becky at education@tbzbrookline.org.

New to 2017-2018: Schedule for Grades 4-7

All students in grades 4-7 will follow the schedule below. Each student will receive an individualized schedule, including room assignments, on the first day of class.

4pm	Arrival, "Homeroom" with grade, check-in, other opening class rituals
4:10pm	Hebrew Lab (by level)
4:45pm	Transition back to homeroom, break for snack
5:55pm	Judaics (with grade)
5:30pm	Elective Option

New to 2017-2018: Y'mei Iyyun (Days of Learning)

There will be three "Y'mei Iyyun" days scheduled into the Beit Rabban calendar this year. These days of learning are intended for both students AND parents, and will be focused around the holidays of Yom Kippur, Tu Bishvat, and Passover. During the afternoon, participants will take 2-4 classes in 25 minute blocks. Our Y'mei Iyyun dates are: September 27, January 31, and March 28.

Zman Beyachad ("Time Together")

Once a month the whole Beit Rabban school will gather together for the last twenty minutes of class (5:40-6), to engage in learning and song.

Homework

We encourage our teachers to send home “family assignments” – a question, a small project, or something else that your family we be encouraged to work on together. These questions will be highlighted in weekly newsletters. Look for an “Ask Your Child...” box in email updates from Beit Rabban.

Food/Snack

Students are encouraged to come with a healthy snack each week. Snack should be dairy/vegetarian. We will provide emergency snacks for those who need. Parents wishing to create a snack policy for their classroom should be in touch with their classroom parent coordinators (see below).

Safety & Health

Safety is a primary concern to everyone at TBZ. Please be sure that your child’s emergency and medical information is complete and updated. When a child is hurt or sick at Beit Rabban, staff will call a parent. By law, we may only apply bandages, soap and water, and ice to any wounds. No medication may be given. If an injury occurs in which it is necessary for the child to receive emergency medical attention, we will call 911 immediately.

Communication

Look for class information and discussion questions in weekly Beit Rabban newsletters, sent by the education director. Teachers will also send detailed classroom updates at the beginnings and endings of curriculum units. There are parent meetings at the beginning, middle, and end of the year, and progress reports will be issued in June with a summary of what has been covered in class, as well as some of the teacher’s insights into your children’s Jewish learning and growth.

If you need to reach the Beit Rabban staff, or your child when Beit Rabban is in session, call Beth at 617.566.8171, ext 13.

Snow days

When Brookline schools are closed, Beit Rabban is closed (even if the storm ends during the day). If snow begins in the afternoon, and the TBZ office closes, Beit Rabban will be closed too. Please call the TBZ snow line: 617-566-8171 ext 16. We will also send an email out if Beit Rabban is closed. If more than two Beit Rabban classes are canceled due to snow days, we will schedule a make-up class for June.

Tzedakah

The values of social justice and tikkun olam are infused in Beit Rabban. As such, we encourage your child to bring a small amount of tzedakah money each week to Beit Rabban classes to put in the tzedakah box. Each year, students will decide which organization(s) to donate the money to.

THE TBZ MISHPACHOT PROGRAM

The goal of TBZ's Beit Rabban and Mishpachot programming is to develop family and child-centric programming that reflects the values and needs of our community. With the help of the rabbis and the lay leadership, a shared vision for the program has emerged over the past five years.

Instead of compartmentalizing education into a traditional Hebrew School or Family Program model, we believe that every experience at TBZ – whether on Shabbat or holidays, at Torah study or in Beit Rabban – is an opportunity to help our members build connections to each other, to TBZ and to engage more deeply in Judaism and Jewish life. In line with our vision, Beit Rabban is only a small part of your child's educational, spiritual and communal experience at TBZ. In fact, like the Beit Rabban curriculum, all Mishpachot programs are carefully planned in order to present your child with deep and well rounded Jewish experience. Our Mishpachot programs include:

- Tfilot Mishpachot: Shabbat services for children (approximately twice a month)
- Friday night Kabbalat Shabbat service with our neighbors at 1550 Beacon Street (Hebrew Senior Life) (approximately once a month)
- Friday night dinners
- Family Services with the whole congregation (twice a year)
- Family Holiday programs
- Mitzvah Day and the Walk for Hunger with Jewish Family and Children's Service
- Holiday Deliveries of packages to our neighbors at 1550 Beacon Street
- Community Retreat
- Host at Homes (formerly Mishpahost), small Shabbat meals in member homes
- Bnei Mitzvah program
- The Tent!: A Boston Neighborhood Teen Program

This is quite a large number of events. We invite you to be a part of as much of this programming as you can - the more opportunity your child has to engage in meaningful Jewish experience with their peers and community, the more they will learn and grow at TBZ. In addition to the programs and events that happen at TBZ, we encourage and strive to support your family's Jewish life at home.

Debbie Gardner – K-1 grade (deborah.spector.gardner@gmail.com)

Debbie Gardner is a Massachusetts licensed teacher (K-8) with broad based experience teaching, and tutoring students in Hebrew and secular subjects. She presents workshops to teachers, administrators and madrichim (aides) both locally and nationally. Her expertise with students with special needs in preschool, religious school, day schools and public schools is helpful in TBZ's inclusion setting. She is looking forward to another fun year at TBZ!

Cantor Lisa Kipen-Hershenson -- 2nd-3rd grade (cantorkh@gmail.com)

Though now a cantor working with elders in an independent living community, Lisa Kipen-Hershenson, M.A., began sharing her love of Judaism through the lens of an early childhood educator. She earned a certificate in Early Childhood Ed. through a joint program offered by Hebrew College and the Bureau of Jewish Education and went on to develop curriculum and teach at Kehillath Israel in Brookline, Temple Beth El of Belmont, Congregation Beth El of the Sudbury Valley and at Cong. Shir Chadash in New York. After 25 years of experience with children and adults, "Morah Lisa" is even more convinced that joy and creativity are integral parts of the learning experience. Whether through making Jewish art, celebrating at a class (fair trade) chocolate seder, getting to learn how a Torah is written by practicing Hebrew writing with quill pens, having a Chanukah pajama party (with our favorite stuffed animal friends) or singing and dancing, each student comes away with their own connections to Judaism and each other. Ms. Kipen-Hershenson is excited to meet all the students, parents, and educators who will partner to make this year a dynamic and engaging journey into the pleasure of learning.

Melanie Blatt - 4th grade (aaamel@gmail.com)

Melanie was born and raised in Baltimore, Maryland. For the past 20 summers, she has attended and worked at summer camp. This past summer, she was one of the Unit Heads and song leader at Camp Zeke, a Fitness and Culinary Arts camp in the Poconos. Melanie is also a certified personal trainer, who enjoys hiking, biking, yoga, and dancing. Music is integrated into everything that she does, and she is currently studying to be a cantor at Hebrew College.

Risa Dunbar - 5th grade

Risa Dunbar is originally from the San Francisco, Bay Area in California. She is finishing her final year as an undergraduate at Brandeis University where she studies Anthropology, creative writing, and Near Eastern and Judaic studies. Risa has worked for over nine years in Hebrew school settings and has spent nearly all of her transformative Jewish time in pluralistic spaces where she learned the values of empathy and communication. She has served as an independent, traditional minyan leader at Brandeis, has experience in community organizing, and event and tour programming for international students from the Middle East. She is particularly passionate about poetry, Jewish pluralism, women's leadership, engaged citizenship, and the transformative power of prayer and spirituality.

Cantor Jeri Robins - 6th Grade

Cantor Jeri has extensive experience in Jewish education, having taught at Temple Reyim in Newton, Temple Shalom of Newton, and Temple Beth Shalom of Needham, where she also served as the Hebrew Coordinator, before becoming the Director of Education at Temple Beth Shalom of the North Shore in Peabody, MA, Director of Education and Youth Engagement at Congregation Or Atid in Wayland, and Director of the Boston Area Jewish Education Program at Brandeis (BJEP). She is also an avid yogi and loves to walk or jog, ski in the winter, and spend time with family and friends. She enjoys cooking and trying new recipes, reading books of all kinds and playing board games with her children.

Zach Mayer - 7th grade

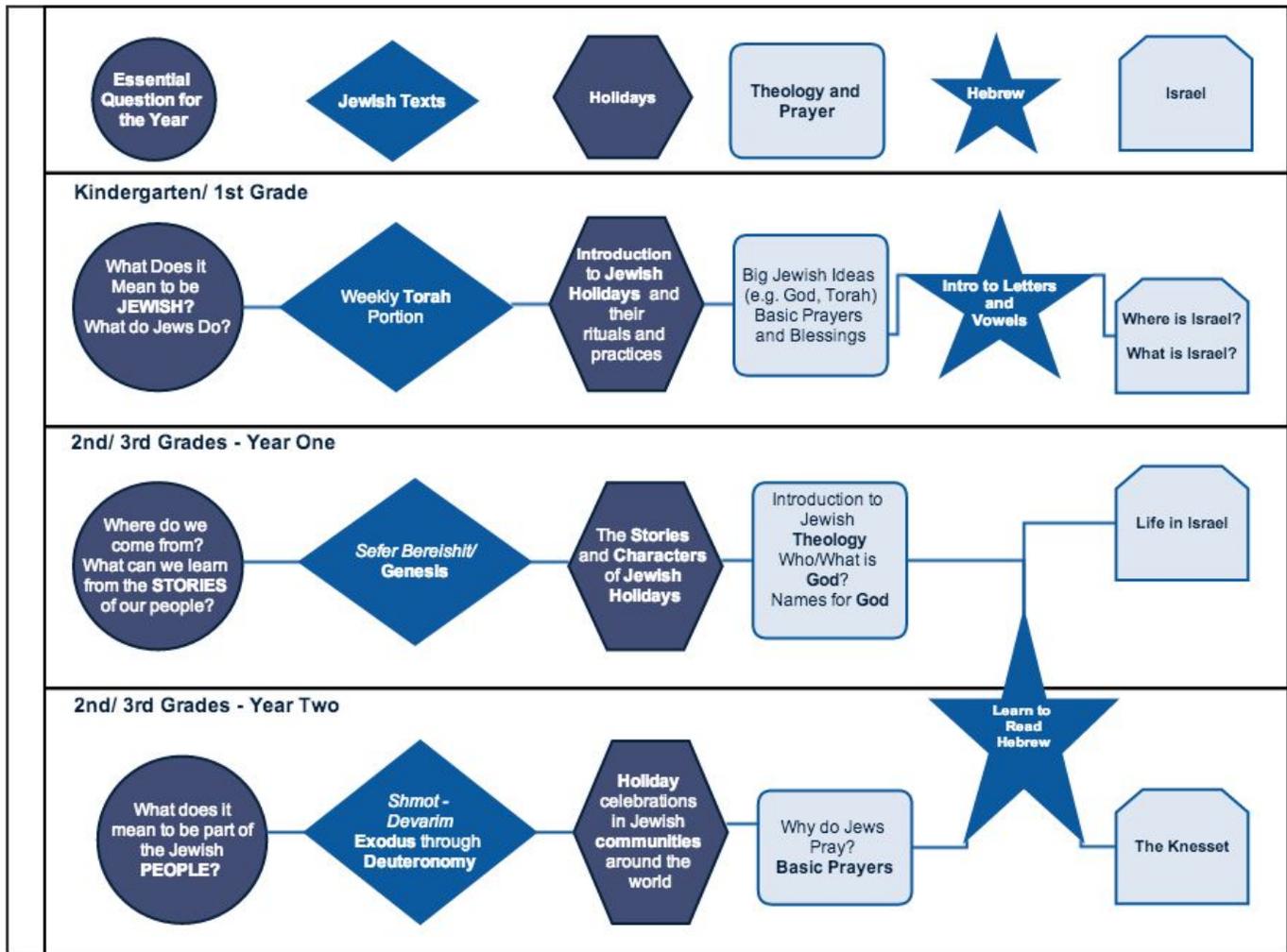
Zach has been on the faculty at the Brandeis Institute of Music and Art, Laguardia Arts High School in Manhattan, Klekamp in the Catskills, NY, and teaches annually at the KlezKanada Jewish music retreat in Quebec. Zach is the musical director at Kahal B'raira, a Humanistic Jewish congregation in Cambridge, and a professional musician in the Boston area. He performs and travels internationally and has over 6 million hits on YouTube for his "Subway Sax Battle."

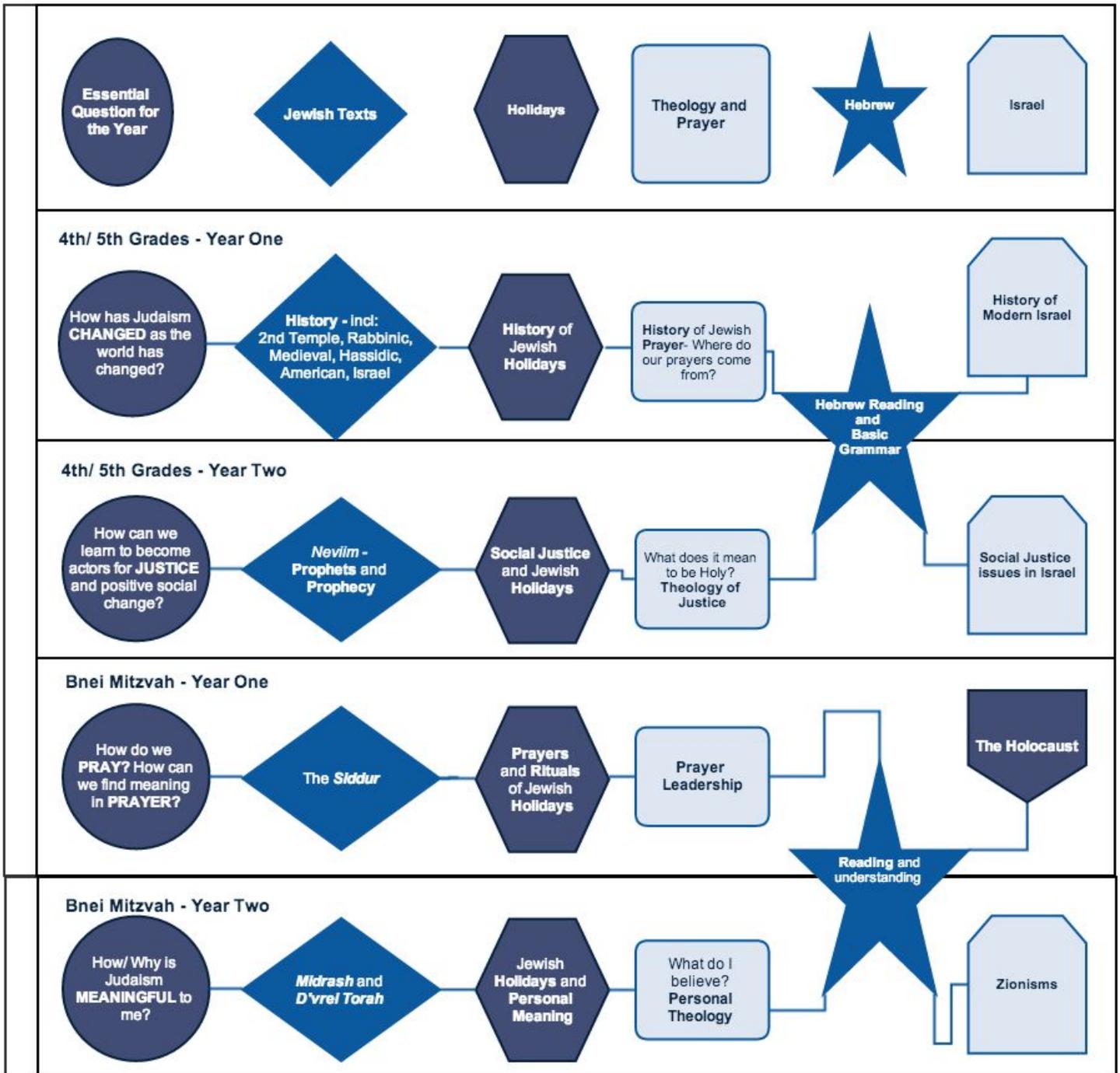
Penny Kohn - Kindergarten – 1st Grade Teacher's Aide

Penny Kohn is a former college registrar and also a certified toddler teacher. Currently, she teaches two classes, Creative Writing and Puppet Voices, at the Devotion After-School Enrichment Program in Brookline. Perhaps she is best known for her puppet, Geveret Spoon, who delights children by popping out of an empty Kleenex box. A fiction writer, Penny has published in Shark Reef Literary Journal. She is also a pianist and sings with the Cambridge Community Chorus.

CURRICULAR OVERVIEW

Beit Rabban uses a biannual curriculum that exposes students to our culture, tradition, celebrations, and tfilot. Each level has its own primary focus and objectives, and integrated throughout all levels is an age-appropriate focus on holidays, Hebrew competency, Jewish literacy, and Israel. **This year, Beit Rabban classes will be following the curriculum for year 2.**





Kindergarten and 1st Grade

The goal for our youngest group is to introduce them to foundational aspects of Jewish learning. Learners explore core Jewish practices, including rituals for Shabbat and holidays, blessings over food and special experiences, and basic Hebrew. Each week, we will learn about the weekly Torah portion, and introduce Torah narratives, characters, and themes. Together, we will sing, make art, move our bodies, and play games as we learn what it means to be Jewish.

2nd and 3rd Grade – Year 1

The Book of Bereishit (Genesis) is the focus of this year. Students read key stories, building their Jewish literacy and learning about reading and thinking about the Torah. We bring in midrashim (rabbinic interpretations of the text), and create our own midrashim as we continue to learn important lessons from Jewish text and tradition. The secondary focus is on Jewish theology, and on having students learn to read and decode Hebrew.

2nd and 3rd Grade – Year 2

This year focuses on themes of Jewish people, holiness and covenant, and what it means to be a part of the Jewish people. Our students continue their study of Torah with an emphasis on major themes in the books of Shemot (Exodus), Vayikra (Leviticus), B'midbar (Numbers), and Devarim (Deuteronomy). Students learn more about tfilah (Jewish prayer), and find personal meaning in Jewish holidays and practices. Students continue learning Hebrew.

4th and 5th Grade – Year 1

This class focuses on key moments and figures in Jewish history when Jews were forced to rethink what it means to be Jewish in order to adapt to a changing world. Through delving deeply into the narratives and stories of Jews in the past, we will explore what it means to “live Jewishly” and we will discuss Jewish values, mitzvot, and communities at various times and places. Our goal is to have literacy of key Jewish moments in history, while learning interesting stories about real people, and their choices and communities. Some topics will include the Second Temple period, early rabbinic Judaism, medieval Jewry in the Middle East and Europe, early Hasidism, early American Judaism, and the creation of the State of Israel.

4th and 5th Grade – Year 2

What do we mean when we say “social justice?” How can 4th and 5th graders begin to learn how they can be actors for meaningful change? The 4/5 year two curriculum focuses on Jewish values, ethics and social justice through several lenses. First, we will provide a Toraitic basis for Jewish laws regarding social and environmental justice and examine the roots of our modern values. Next we will read and learn about the leadership and idealism of the biblical prophets. Our primary goal is to examine the role of prophecy in the *Tanakh* and draw practical conclusions that will inform the students’ growing Jewish identity and sense of themselves as budding leaders. Then, we will study modern “prophets” and Jewish justice leaders such as Abraham Joshua Heschel, Bella Abzug, and other environmental, feminist and civil rights giants. Finally, we will learn

about modern tools for creating change and explore how we can become leaders for social change.

In addition to the prophecy curriculum, fourth and fifth graders also study texts, ideas and values relating to the holiday cycle, Jewish liturgy, Jewish practice and Israel that help them to find greater meaning in and facility with Jewish ritual and tradition. Throughout the year, the fourth and fifth grade students will learn about these different areas of Jewish tradition and practice through the lens social justice values and activism.

Bnei Mitzvah (6th and 7th Grade) – Year 1

In the B'nei Mitzvah class we will focus on prayer in two ways - practical skills that help us prepare for our b'nei mitzvah, and the history and theology of prayer, which can help us connect more meaningfully to prayer and Jewish community. Skills will include - leading prayers and learning to compile a siddur. Through learning about a wide range of Jewish approaches to prayer, God and Torah, we will spend time thinking and talking about what we really think, and how we can live a Jewish life that is meaningful to us. We also will learn about the Holocaust through the Facing History and Ourselves curriculum.

Bnei Mitzvah (6th and 7th Grade) – Year 2

The B'nei Mitzvah year two curriculum is an integrated exploration of Jewish text, Jewish history, and Jewish identity. Throughout our different curricular focuses, we will be exploring the question of Jewish identity and peoplehood, giving the b'nei mitzvah students ample opportunity to explore their own Judaism and who they are as a Jew. As we explore the history and ritual of each holiday, special focus will be given to how we wish to celebrate each holiday and finding ways to make each holiday personally meaningful. At the end of the year each student will learn how to write a d'var Torah. Also, all students will complete an independent research project that helps them build their skills and interest in a topic of their choice.