



Curriculum 2020-2021

This curriculum combines virtual and in-person learning opportunities. In addition to these offerings, we will offer field trips and guide students in volunteering and engaging in additional independent learning. A family advisor will supervise each student's learning plan and reflect with them each month on what they have learned.

Virtual Classes

Below are two out of the three classes we are planning. One will be held first semester and two will be held second semester. Each session will be one hour with opportunities for additional learning outside of the Zoom class. These classes will be small so that the teacher can work closely with each student.

Jewish Wisdom on Navigating a Pandemic (6 sessions)

Younger students:

- Explore contagious diseases and plagues in the Torah.
- Discuss Jewish values like *pikuach nefesh* (saving a life). Learn what the ancient rabbis had to say about this principle.
- Discuss ethical decision-making scenarios: What would you do if your friend was really lonely but it wasn't safe to give them a hug? What would you do if you saw a classmate who was not social distancing?
- Share what it's like not to see your friends. Create friendship journals to stay connected to your classmates.

Older Students:

- Discuss how *pikuach nefesh* (saving a life) informs our thinking during COVID-19.
- Debate current issues in our country that have been exacerbated by the pandemic and learn how to think about them in terms of Jewish texts and values.
- Share what it feels like to grow up in a pandemic. Listen to older students discuss what it was like to postpone a bar or bat mitzvah or do it virtually.
- Debate ethical decision-making scenarios: What would you do if your brother was engaging in risky behavior and your elderly grandparents were coming for a visit? Would you attend a protest for racial justice with a mask if you knew that it would not be possible to be physically distant from others?

Judaism and Racial Justice (6 sessions)

Younger students:

- There are many different kinds of people with different skin colors in our world. The Torah says that all people are created *b'tzelem Elohim* (in the image of God) – all people are deserving of love and respect. What does that mean to you?

- Our country has discriminated against black Americans for hundreds of years, even using violence against entire black communities. What is our role in helping to end these injustices?
- Ethical decision-making scenarios: What would you do if a white classmate made a hurtful remark to a black classmate? What would you do if a white teacher was not treating a black classmate fairly?

Older students:

- The medieval sage, Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra, teaches that one who witnesses an act of oppression and remains silent is the same, in moral terms, as one who commits the act in the first place. Is there such a thing as an innocent bystander?
- Several Jewish texts address the principle of taking responsibility for injustices in our world. How do these texts help us think about white privilege? In what ways do white students need to take responsibility for what they have based on their skin color?
- The American Jewish community has seen itself as primarily white and Ashkenazi, even though there are many Jews of color. What unique experiences do Jews of color bring to the Jewish community? Why is it important to lift these voices up?
- Explore a topic such as defunding the police or reparations for black communities. How can we apply Jewish texts to these issues? Research an and create an ethical scenario that you can present to the class.
- If you are going to give tzedakah to a racial justice organization, how would you decide which one to support? Which issues and approaches are the most important or effective? Present your findings to the group.

Outdoor and In-Person Learning

These experiential sessions will be led by Rabbi Laurie or a teacher, and we will strictly follow public health guidelines. We will reschedule if there is inclement weather. We ask that parents attend with their children.

Judaism and Nature (3 sessions)

All ages

- Learn about Jewish values such as *ba'al tashchit* (do not destroy) that focus on our responsibility to care for the earth.
- Go on a nature walk and read Jewish poetry. Do Jewish mindfulness exercises. Sing Jewish songs. Write a reflection.
- Make something beautiful out of found items in nature and leave it for someone else to find.
- Clean up trash in a park or at a lake.

Learning and Experiencing Jewish Holidays

The focus of our year is Jewish holidays and culture from around the world. We are sending home Jewish holiday kits that students can do on their own or with a family member. These will be tailored to specific age groups and will include short videos, arts and crafts projects, discussion questions, book suggestions, and other options for engagement. We also encourage our students to register for PJ Library or PJ Our Way and receive free Jewish books every month.

Younger and Older Students

- What is the meaning of the holiday? Why is it meaningful to celebrate it?
- Learn how Jews around the world celebrate different holidays. Focus on Jewish cultural traditions that differ from our own.
- Study the history of a Jewish community from a different part of the world.
- Ashkenazi Jews have often ignored the experiences and histories of Sephardic and Mizrahi Jews. Explore why this has happened and how we can expand our understanding of Jewish culture.
- Make food from a Jewish culture that differs from ours or learn to sing songs from a different Jewish culture.

Hebrew Tutoring

Our Hebrew tutoring program will continue one-on-one over Zoom for students in 3rd-6th grades.

Students will first work on learning Hebrew letters and vowels and forming syllables. As they become more proficient, they will read sentences, learn vocabulary, and read and sing Shabbat prayers. After students are able to read the prayers competently, they have the option of learning how to write in script as well as reading and speaking modern Hebrew.