



CBJ Religious School Newsletter

November 2019

Kislev 5780

KINDERGARTEN DIVES INTO THE YEAR!

Debbie Weiss, Kindergarten

HEH LEARNS ABOUT THE IRON DOME

Tammy Scheibe & Sandra Zussman, Heh

Our Kindergarten class has been busy, busy, busy. We jumped right into the year with the stories of Creation and Adam and Eve. Next, we celebrated the High Holidays. Besides eating apples and honey and round challah, each of the yeladim had the chance to try sounding two shofarot: one regular sized, and one really long shofar. We visited the Sukkah and made beautiful "stained glass" fruit to decorate it. We also made our own mini sukkah! Just after Simchat Torah, we celebrated our Consecration. We chanted the "Shema" and "Shehechyanu" and were welcomed by the congregation into our formal Jewish education with a blessing from the Rabbi and the gift of a mezuzah necklace. Noah's ark and kindness to animals were next. Sarah and Abraham taught us about God keeping his promises and the value of hospitality. We learned about kashrut and played a shopping game where we had to find and draw the hechshers. We examined our class Torah and learned about all of the different parts. Did you know that every Torah in every country contains the exact same words? Do you know what it means to be Jewish? We do! Do you know about

God? We do! We even drew pictures of what we think God looks like. Please stop by the hallway downstairs and take a look at our creations. We are learning about the mitzvot, including tzedakah, and contributed to a Thanksgiving basket for a family in need. We really love music with Hazzan and Ari, and we are happy that Brooke and Sarah help us in class!



We have been working diligently to learn about Israel and Zionism, and how Israel became our Jewish homeland. We learned about the different Zionists through participating in skits and learning about the different Zionist movements; for example: political, agricultural, etc. We have also been working on current Israel topics such as what just occurred in Gaza. Rabbi visited our class and shared important information about the Iron Dome. While he was at a conference, he met the man who was the primary engineer responsible for the creation of the Iron Dome. His name is Ari Sacher and he shared not only vital information but also that he loves jellybeans, there is a kid in all of us!



Aleph & Heh students visit The Chicago Chesed Fund! They stocked the shelves and learned about the services Chesed offers.



SECOND GRADE – GIVING IS GOOD

Lisa Ribot, Second Grade

Second Grade’s use of the Shalom Learning curriculum has introduced Jewish values like recognizing what is good, expressing gratitude and comforting the sick. Much of our classroom work has focused on the practical aspects of “doing” the mitzvah or middot so that students have a framework for “how to” practice hakarat hatov (recognizing the good) or what it takes to provide cheer to someone who is ill. If the value is viewed as an exercise, the belief is that practicing it provides the same kind of muscle memory benefits that physical exercise does. The more often we practice a value, the easier it is and the better we are at it.

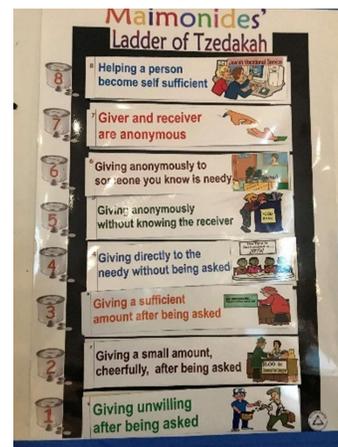
Our Family program this year focused on the value of Tzedakah. The children and their parents learned that while giving is a mitzvah not all giving is created equal at least in the eyes of the Rambam, aka Maimonides. Maimonides taught that tzedakah can be thought of as a ladder with certain acts of tzedakah ranking higher than other acts. During our family program families were asked to rank different ways of giving to see which they thought reflected best on the giver. For example, our families considered whether giving anonymously was better than giving publicly or whether it mattered if the giver knew who the recipient of the charity was to be. The highest rung, Maimonides taught, is where the giver helps a person to become self-sufficient, much like the proverb which teaches “give a man a fish

and he eats for a day, teach him to fish and he eats for a life time.”

After arranging their tzedakah ladders to reflect their values, Second Graders considered the question of whether tzedakah is an obligation for all of us regardless of how much or how little we have. Jamie and Seth were convinced initially that poor people must be exempted from giving tzedakah because they don’t have much and rely on the charity of others. Hannah agreed at first but then took the opposite position, noting that everyone has something to give and it need not be monetary to be considered Tzedakah. Her classmates ran with this idea, recalling a story from Sukkot about how poor people contributed to the beauty of the sukkah by sharing a story when aren’t able to bring expensive food and drink. Even people who don’t have a lot to spare outgrow their toys and can donate them to others in need.

Second Graders understand that they can make a difference. They can band together with groups devoted to a specific need in our community like Maot Chitim, Vernon Area Food Pantry, Bernie’s Book Bank or Feed My Starving Children. The brightly painted tzedakah banks they made to cap off our learning were just a start. A coin or two here and there and a plan to participate in a community program are all ways to practice the mitzvah of Tzedakah. The more we do it, the easier it becomes.

I would love to hear your tzedakah stories and share them with the class. Please encourage your child to tell me about what your family does to exercise their tzedakah muscles or send me an email.



FIRST GRADE: MITZVOT ALL AROUND US

Erica Veronie, First Grade

First Grade has been busy already this year with our Hebrew letters, learning Torah stories, and learning about Jewish values through mitzvot we can do, even as a 1st grader! Each week we explore a new letter by comparing it to previous letters, putting our bodies in the shape of the letter, using keywords in our machberet, and playing with the letter in fun centers like play doh, coloring pages and even Sudoku!

We have also been exploring a few Torah stories and looking at the lessons that we can learn. We learned to say "I'm sorry" and made our own whale to talk about Jonah and the Whale. We made a toilet paper holder Ruth and learned how Ruth was loyal to Naomi and took care of both of them. We enjoyed tying in the story of Ruth and Naomi to helping the hungry in our own community. We created adorable napkin holders and combined with Kindergarten to fill a Thanksgiving food basket for a family in need in our community.

Along with our Torah stories we have explored some of the mitzvot in the Torah. We learned that there are actually 613 mitzvot (Commandments) in the Torah. Wow! That means we are constantly thinking about doing a mitzvah every day! We also tested out the theory that there are as many pomegranate seeds as there are mitzvot in the Torah. We each had a chance to count (and then eat) some pomegranate seeds.

We also had the amazing opportunity to help families over Rosh Hashanah by delivering food baskets for Ma'ot Chitim. The students were amazing and put smiles on so many faces.

Additionally, I really enjoyed watching you interact with your child at our family program to learn more about the different things we can do at our synagogue and the amazing people we can find there! I'm excited to continue learning with all of your children this year.



BET: BT'ZELEM ELOHEIM

Stacy Groner, Bet

The Bet students have been very busy over the past few weeks. We have been exploring the Jewish value B'tzelem Eloheim, being created in God's image. The children brainstormed ways to be good people and how to take care of themselves. They had fun looking in mirrors and creating Word Art describing themselves. We also discussed why it is important to think of others and to help make the world a better place. We really enjoyed learning about B'tzelem Eloheim.



ALEPH TORAH PROJECT

Peggy Weiner, Aleph

The Aleph class has been working hard every week on our Torah project! Each student recently put together his or her own Yad. First, they decorated all the pieces and then decided how they wanted to put all the pieces together. The students came up with some fun designs and had a great time putting them together! Students will bring them home at the end of the year when their projects are complete.



DALET MOVING TRADITIONS AND MORE!

Michele Sussman, Dalet



In the beginning of the year, the students discussed Teshuvah and the process of Jewish repentance. We applied the Teshuvah process to the students' lives. Through many activities, the students learned how to improve their behavior and relationships to others.

The second unit involved B'tzelem Eloheim and how people are created in G-d's image. Discussions were held regarding the attributes of what makes one beautiful. They also discussed the differences between mitzvot (commandments) and G'milut Hasidim (acts of loving kindness). The students spent many classes on disability awareness and inclusion of all individuals. This included wonderfully insightful discussions.

The third unit Sifrei Kodesh (holy books) was very exciting for the students. They learned about the Tanach, Mishnah, Talmud, and the Shulchan Aruch. The students created a web page prototype, designed a companion worksheet, and presented their information orally. In addition, the students created a jingle, a billboard and/or a commercial regarding their position on animal research according to Judaism.



GIMEL: A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

June Fox, Gimel

During Gimel's family program we explored different perspectives. Through an opening exercise and text exploration, we realized that we see different things all around us, based on our perspective. Each family then had an opportunity to read through a couple different articles on Btz'elem Eloheim. We looked for connections to our lives, evidence of our findings and questions we still had. We then worked with Adobe Spark to create poster and/or videos about our explanation of Bt/zelem Eloheim.



GIMEL AND DALET EXPLORE TEFILLOT AND THE SHALOMLEARNING ESCAPE ROOM TOGETHER

