

Limud Week 4  
By Axelle LaBaw

"I love to hear the shofar blast, sometimes slow and sometimes fast!"

That was just a snippet of the song echoing from the pre-k and kindergarten classroom. Inside, the children were gathered in a circle around Morah Gail, repeating after her as they moved their bodies to the lyrics. The song took them through a review of the Jewish holidays, accompanied with dance moves that imitated some of the traditions, like shaking the lulav. And right beside the musical bunch was a large paper cutout of a menorah, foreshadowing the lesson the children would soon begin.

Morah Pam's students also engaged in a mini review lesson, focusing specifically on shabbat. The first and second graders listed the three main symbols: grape juice/wine, candles, and challah. Morah Pam brought the symbols to life as she guided the students through a practice of the prayers and displayed a golden kiddush cup and a decorated cover for the challah.

"They cover it," she explained, "because they don't want the challah to be jealous." Though, as noted by Emily and Olivia, the challah cover is quite efficient in keeping others from eating what's beneath. With Morah Hannah, the third and fourth graders needed no more than sticky notes and their Hebrew vocabulary to have a little fun. Each student received a sticky note with the Hebrew word for an animal on the front that everyone else could see but them, and they took turns asking questions to find out their secret identity. Questions like "Can I fly?" and "Am I fuzzy?" helped the students to narrow down on the list of possible animals they could be, ranging from peacocks to crocodiles. And the telltale sign of someone who'd figured out what was on their sticky note? The sound of Hebrew as they sounded out the letters in the word for their animal.

"We're making a giant Israel," Stella exclaimed, motioning to the table in front of her.

On it was a bright yellow cutout of the country, slowly but surely being labeled and colored by the precise third and fourth graders. Logan and Madden traced the map on the wall to find notable locations and bodies of water, scanning the curves of the coast. Morah Leslie cut out metallic blue oceans and stuck them on as the map gradually grew more and more detailed. And, right beside designated artists Stella and Margeaux, was a pile of cities and monuments waiting to be sorted and glued by the upcoming-and promising-cartographers.

"There are things that make sense in English that don't make sense in Hebrew," Moreh Avi clarified.

"'Did you get your hair cut?' is a single word in Hebrew."

The fifth and sixth graders carried on a conversation about the phenomena of languages, discussing how words can be combined and shortened and altered by gender. They referenced pictures of emotions on the wall to discuss how feelings are translated through English and Hebrew, listening as Moreh Avi put them into sentences. Fortunately, the students knew that ra'eiv meant "hungry" before they went down to the kitchen for the inaugural session of Cooking Jew Things from Around the World.

("It's a working title," Avi admitted, though the name certainly stuck.)

For their first meal, the students would be introduced to Jewish Moroccan food. Morocco, Avi noted, is a 2,000 year old staple in the Jewish community. And, with potatoes, tomatoes, lemons, ginger root, chickpeas, onions, and more, the students would be bringing the cuisine of the North African country to CTI. From scratch, these ingredients turned into a scrumptious meal of couscous and tajine—a Moroccan stew traditionally cooked in clay pots. In the clamoring kitchen, Jordan and Greg peeled lemons while Julian and Rachel worked on the garlic, and Sydney was in charge of the gourds.

"Food is a universal thing," Emily commented. "Cuisine is one aspect of culture that can connect people. Because when food is good, food is good."

Zosia, beside her, agreed.

"It's a very 'family' kind of thing."

And nothing speaks family than members of CTI of all ages coming together to prepare a delicious meal.

















