

Limud
November 18, 2018

By Axelle LaBaw

"How can you define a blessing?"

Cantor Gustavo posed the question to his seventh graders as they prepared to learn about the Parshat Vayetze. The students, as usual, did not hesitate.

"It's something you say to remember something," Eli volunteered. "Or to respect something."
"It's a loving thing," the Cantor agreed. "It's a protection. So why would you give your blessing to only one child?"

The students reviewed the story of Rebecca tricking her blind husband, Isaac, into blessing Jacob rather than his brother Esau. It was custom back then, they learned, to only bless one child. But today, things have changed.

"Every child," the Cantor declared, "should be loved and blessed."

For Morah Melissa's pre-k and kindergarteners, a blessing in their lives is family. The children, making popsicle stick menorahs with candle fingerprints, expressed their eagerness to spend Chanukah with their loved ones.

"I like going to my dad's cousin's house," Scarlett remarked, gluing her paper menorah to the page. Ella was reminded of the joy she gets visiting her grandma's home on the holiday, and Asher responded with how excited he is to celebrate with his family.

The third and fourth graders also prepared for Chanukah with Morah Leslie, tapping away at sheets of aluminum to forge lanterns. They nailed designs of stars of David, menorahs, dreidels, and even the Hebrew spelling of Shalom into the material, holding it up to the ceiling to see the light pass through. The lanterns would later go home with the students, awaiting a candle on the first night of the holiday.

Morah Pam's first and second graders would also take home their own craft: tzedakah boxes. With stickers of Hebrew letters and crumpled tissue paper, the students decorated their boxes with words and symbols of kindness and gratitude-especially their newest vocabulary term, todah rabah (thank you). Some students even chose who they would donate their savings to as they worked, with Addison opting for the animal shelter and Kenzie deciding to give to the homeless.

Moreh Avi's fifth and sixth graders and Morah Hannah's third and fourth graders both focused on vocabulary building. "It's Hebrew letter recognition with coloring," Morah Hannah explained, gesturing to her students' work. Their objective? Color Alefs red, Lameds yellow, Memes green, and so on. With Moreh Avi, the students wrote down words for emotion-including tov (happy), atsuv (sad), and ayeif (tired)-for a matching game to help them remember the meanings even through the Thanksgiving break this upcoming week.







