

# **Kitot Alef – Gimel**

## **(1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grades)**

### **The Primary Years**

Students in these grades attend classes on Sundays from 9:30 am–12:00 pm. We are working to create a general perception at Gates of Heaven that the primary years (or even earlier) is the best time to enroll a child in the Religious School. At the same time, the curriculum is developed with an awareness that we continue to receive first time students through 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

This is the time when children develop the Tzedakah habit, bringing a weekly contribution. The recipient organization for each class is determined through discussion of agencies that support their caring curriculum theme. Students will develop an understanding that they have a role that goes beyond their classroom, Temple, or family through giving Tzedakah and choosing how it is disbursed.

We use art, music, dancing, and other enrichment activities to unlock our students' hearts, engaging them emotionally. By connecting to their hearts, we will gain greater access to their minds and teach them even more.

A very important feature of the primary grades is the Madrikhim program. Madrikhim are high school students who work as teaching assistants in our classrooms. Students have the opportunity to develop a relationship with these teens who exemplify the idea of maintaining lasting connections to our congregation.

Finally, our students interact with teachers who are role models of Jewish adulthood who feel deeply the value of the Religious School experience and who are passionate about being Jewish and teaching.