

2017-2018 Religious School Curriculum Overview

Congregation Beth Shalom's Religious School is a supplemental school that meets 24-26 weeks per year. Students meet for two hours of religious study on Sunday. Grades three through seven have an additional two hours of Hebrew study per week. The goals of the religious school are to create a foundation for the student to build his/her lifelong pursuit of Jewish knowledge. These educational goals set forth by Congregation Beth Shalom are to develop building blocks which will strengthen the student's faith in God, love of Torah, develop a bond with Israel, Tikkun Olam and identification with the Jewish people, community and language. These goals can only be achieved through regular attendance and with a partnership in the home. Rabbi Don Levy of Beit Torah in Colorado said "The single best thing that parents can do to ensure their kids' continuing engagement in Jewish life (in addition to sending them to religious school and ensuring they have a meaningful bar/bat mitzvah) is to be engaged in Jewish life themselves."

The goals of the curriculum are that upon graduation from high school the student will be able:

- - to celebrate Shabbat, Holidays, festivals and Jewish ceremonies that mark significant occasions in their lives
- - to have a strong, positive Jewish identity
- - to know their heritage and history
- - to express kinship with Israel
- - to understand the history and concepts behind the celebrations of the Jewish holidays
- - to have a basic understanding of Torah
- - to understand and feel a commitment to Jewish ethics and values
- - to be able to participate in religious services
- - to read Hebrew with a basic understanding of liturgical Hebrew

Regular attendance and **active participation** are necessary for the student to achieve these goals.

Congregation Beth Shalom offers religious education to congregant member's children and grandchildren grades preschool through grade twelve. A variety of resources, educational techniques and tools are utilized to meet the needs of our diverse community. Texts and resources from Behrman House, Torah Aura, URJ, KTAV and ARE publishers are among those resources used along with the professionally developed teachers' guides. The teacher's guides come with lessons plans that are age and grade appropriate. Teachers supplement these plans to augment the learning experience.

Preschool is offered for children ages three through entry into kindergarten. Students should be out of diapers prior to enrollment. Text materials from Behrman House, Torah Aura and ARE are used for this grade. The primary texts for this year are: Jewish and Me Holidays, Jewish and Me Mitzvot and some lessons from Torah Talk. There is a two-year curriculum cycle with new resources new material and activities introduced during the alternate year. The Jewish and Me series explores Jewish holidays and Tzedakah geared for the preschool learner with images and questions appropriate for their age. These lessons also include discussion topics for home reinforcement.

Jewish and Me Holidays has 16 holiday folders of Fall and Spring Holidays. The teacher's guide includes the overview, core concept, learning objectives, words to know and teaching opportunities. The lessons include : Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Simchat Torah, Celebrating Shabbat, Celebrating Chanukah, The story of Chanukah, My fall Holidays, Tu B'Shevat, Shabbat Blessings, Purim, Celebrating Passover, The Story of Passover, Yom Ha'atzma'ut, Shavuot and My Spring Holidays

Example - Rosh Hashanah

Core Concept – On Rosh Hashanah we celebrate the creation of the world and look forward to a sweet year.

Learning Objectives

Students will: Describe how we celebrate the birthday of the world. Explain that the sweetness of apples and honey helps us look forward to a sweet year. Talk with their families about their hopes for the coming year.

Jewish and Me Mitzvot series has the same format and similar teaching guide as the Holidays series. There are eight lessons to help the preschoolers explore doing mitzvot. The lessons are: Doing Mitzvot, Taking Care of Myself, Giving Tzedakah, Shalom Bayit, Being Kind, Helping Others Feel Better, Caring for Animals and Protecting the Environment.

Torah Talk is a teaching text that has 19 lessons and the goals are outlined in the teaching guide for the teaching staff. The big concept is for students to become familiar with the Torah at an early age, the importance of the Torah and the Jewish people, the Torah's special place in the synagogue, start to build an identity with the people of Israel, hear the central biblical events and provide the foundation for continued learning and understanding. Each lesson has age appropriate activities to enhance learning.

Some Hebrew is integrated into the curriculum such as common words, alef bet, some blessings, the Shema, Modeh Ani, Shabbat songs etc. The fall will focus on Fall holidays, Shabbat and tzedakah. The spring will focus on spring holidays, Israel, Shabbat and Torah.

The class will meet in the preschool room starting at 9:30. They will also have 20 minutes of music each week. The class will practice blessings over the Shabbat candles, motzi, Chanukah candles, and washing hands. A family workshop on Shabbat in the home will be planned.

Kindergarten is offered for students entering kindergarten in the fall or who have just missed the kindergarten cut off in secular school. These students study Torah, mitzvot, holidays and customs continuing building on the previous year's studies.

Morah, Morah, Teach Me Torah introduces young learners to Torah study with an age appropriate lesson for each portion. They will follow the Torah lessons of the Jewish calendar week that are studied while school is in session. Each lesson includes goals, objectives, several multimedia activities and discussion for the teachers.

Let's Discover Holidays curriculum series has 16 lessons: Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Simchat Torah, Shabbat; the Creation of the World, Shabbat: A Day of Rest, The Story of Chanukah, Celebrating Chanukah, Tu B'Shevat, The Story of Purim, Celebrating Purim, Celebration Passover, The Story of Passover, Yom Ha'Aztnaut, Shavout: The Ten Commandments and Celebrating Shavout. The teacher's guide includes goals, objectives and activities.

Hebrew letters and order will be taught using My Favorite Alef Bet Coloring Book. The students will continue to practice and expand their Hebrew with common words, picture cards, blessings for wine, bread, Shabbat candle lighting, hand washing, the Shema, and Modeh ani. They will also learn some Shabbat prayers and songs in music.

These students have 30 minutes of music each week with grades k-2.

First Grade students are beginning readers and writers. The classroom material is presented in a way that fosters this natural growth.

I Can Celebrate Jewish Holidays has ten chapters reinforcing previously taught lessons and goals. The teacher's guide provides activities for enduring understanding.

Teach Me Torah has 16 individual Torah lessons from Creation through Esther. The teacher's guide four objectives for each lesson, the core concept, a value and a take home lesson. The teacher's guide also includes a letter to parents explaining how to use the take home piece of the lesson.

Let's Discover Israel introduces the students to Israel. There are eight lessons from our Homeland to Israeli foods. The teacher's guide includes three objectives for each lesson. This will be taught in the spring.

Let's Discover the Alef Bet introduces the names of the letters, sounds, order, sight recognition, reading right to left concept, sound letter association, pictorial reinforcement, primary Hebrew vocabulary and introduces a Jewish value with each letter. The students will continue with their blessings, Shabbat songs and prayers.

These students have 30 minutes of music each week with grades k-2.

Grade 2

Let's Discover the Bible has 16 lessons from Creation to Jonah. The teacher guide provides 3-4 goals that are at a higher conceptual level than previously taught, discussion questions, identification of key vocabulary and project opportunities.

BJL Mitzvot has eight lessons Derek Eretz, Tzedakah, Feeding the Hungry, Keeping the Earth, Talmud Torah, Visiting the Sick, Welcoming Guests, and Guarding your Tongue. The teacher's guide includes for each lesson: Big ideas – feeding people who are hungry is a mitzvah, when we are feeding hungry people we are imitating God, who fed Israel with manna in the wilderness, there are three learning activities and two or three goals for each lesson.

The Jewish Holiday Treasure Trail has 24 lessons which includes how and why we celebrate, related history and values, and essential English and Hebrew Vocabulary. The teacher's guide includes key concepts and learning goals/objectives for each lesson.

Shalom Alef Bet – A Pre-Primer the student's first workbook for Hebrew with key sight words and pictures. The students will continue with their blessings, Shabbat songs and prayers

These students have 30 minutes of music each week with grades k-2.

Grades 3&4

This year grades 3 and 4 will be combined as they were when they were in grades 1&2.

Building Jewish Identity Volumes 3&4 – Volume 3 is People of the Books our sacred texts and Volume 4 is Jewish History and Heritage. (Grade 3 completed Volumes 1&2 last year). Volume 3 welcomes students into the transmission of Jewish thought and encouraging them to participate in the Jewish process of study and participation. Volume 4 brings Jewish history alive by introducing key themes and moments in Jewish history.

Journey of a Lifetime – discusses the Bible stories and mitzvot highlighting the ethical values of each lifecycle event. The teacher's guide includes interactive exercises allowing students to personalize each ceremony, and has a comprehensive glossary providing essential cultural vocabulary. The contents include Brit Milah, Brit Bat, Baby Naming, Consecration, Bar and Bat Mitzvah, Confirmation, The Marriage Ceremony, The Funeral and Rituals of Mourning. The teacher's guide also has goals, objectives and concepts taught for each lifecycle events.

Hebrew Grade 3 marks the beginning of separate Hebrew classes. This class meets on Sundays and Wednesdays. Each Wednesday the Hebrew students lead a tefilah service. Ot La –Ba'ot is the text book that is used for this grade. Ot La Ba'ot begins the Hebrew curriculum that has the end goal basic proficiency in liturgical Hebrew and the siddur. Rather than teach the alef bet in the order on the chart it is started in a way that fosters reading siddur phrases at the very beginning. The textbook tells the story of the language, teaching bits of conversation, connects Hebrew with ritual life. The teacher's guide also comes with a training DVD for the teacher. The prayers and songs in the text book are: Shema, Bar'chu, Shehechianu, Adon Olam Leha dodi, Ein Keylocheynu, and Hatikva.

Hebrew Grade 4 S'fatai Tiftah (Open My Lips) is designed to follow Ot La Ba'ot. The students will participate and lead Wednesday evening tefilah services. They will learn the meaning of the prayers along with being able to read them, the prayers and blessings taught at this level are: food bracha, mitzvah bracha, Bar chu, Ahavah Rabbah, Shema, V'Ahavta, Michah Mocha, Kiddush, Modeh Ani, and Mah tovu.

These students have 30 minutes of music on Sunday starting at 9:30 with grades 3-7

Grades 5 Religious School class

Be Your Best Self and Building Family Connections are volumes 1 and 2 of a 4 volume series that focuses on the values of our traditions. Students will understand the values concepts, identify core texts associated with each value, recognize relevance of these values to society and develop a plan to adopt each value in their personal lives.

Be Your Best Self focuses on individual dignity (K'vod Habriyot), returning to your best self (Teshuvah), personal satisfaction (Sameach B'chelko) and humility (Anavah)

Essential questions: What does it mean to have personal dignity? How does humility help the world?

Building Family Connections focuses on the values of gratitude (Hakarat Hatov), family harmony (Sh'lom Bayit), Truth (Emet), and Holiness (Kedushah)

Essential Questions: How do I show gratitude? What risks do I take for the sake of sh'lom bayit? How much is truth worth?

Understanding Jewish Holidays and Customs will be used as the resource for teaching Jewish Holidays

These students have 30 minutes of music Sunday beginning at 9:30am with grades 3-7.

Grade 5 Hebrew Journeys Through the Siddur Friday Evenings combines performing the prayers with mastering some of the language used in prayers along with providing students with ways that prayers can come to have personal meaning. Students learn to recognize root words and language elements to develop a strong connection with the liturgy. This is volume one of the Hebrew series which will equip students with the ability to perform basic Shabbat prayers at home, Friday evening and Shabbat morning. The teacher's guide is comprehensive with activities for each lesson.

.”

Grade 6 and 7

Apples and Oranges: Judaism and the World's Religions is a comparative religion text looking at where Judaism is similar and where it is different. There is an overview along with important things to remember about the religions. The lessons taught are: how to compare religions, some important and unique things to remember about Judaism, a brief history of Christianity, comparing Judaism and Christianity, comparing Judaism and Islam. The teacher's guide has text based activities

Min Ha'aretz – making meaning from our food this book explores the relationship of our most basic need – food, to Judaism's earliest writings, and the myriad of food related issues and dilemmas today

Rediscovering the Jewish Holidays: Tradition in a Modern Voice text mixes tradition with adding the students own unique contributions to Holiday observances. The goal is to not only achieve a deeper level of understanding of the Jewish holidays but also find personal meaning as well as to participate in evolving traditions. The teacher's guide includes learning objectives, vocabulary, Q& A, opportunities to make it your own and making a connection at home are some of the items included in the lesson plans. There are 16 lessons starting with the calendar and ending with Tisha B'Av: A Time of Mourning.

Grade 6/7 Hebrew Journeys Through the Siddur Torah Service and Concluding Prayers and Journeys through the Siddur Shabbat Morning combines prayers with mastering some of the language used in the prayers along with providing students with ways for prayers to have personal meaning. Students continue to recognize root words and language elements to develop a strong connection with the liturgy. This is volume three of the Hebrew series which equips students with the ability to perform basic Shabbat prayers at home, Friday evening and Shabbat morning. The teacher's guide is comprehensive with activities for each lesson. This class completed Journeys Through the Siddur Friday Evenings

The Rabbi teaches Torah to this class for 15-20 minutes using the Chumash.

These students have 30 minutes of music Sunday starting at 9:30am with grades 3-7.

T'filah Grades 3-7 This year the students will work on digging deeper into the meaning of prayers, what can the meaning bring to their lives and how do they relate to the prayer. This activity will be each week having students of different age levels working together in both Hebrew and English, using mindfulness activities, discussion, reflection, personal meaning and at times writing their own version of prayers. The program will be supported by two resources – Behrman House's resource Making T'filah Meaningful and led by Sarah Kusnitz, one of our teachers who has been teaching this at camp this summer.

Grade 8/JYG

Last year 8th graders met each Sunday from 11:30-12:30 as a junior youth group. This year we would like to offer the same with a once a month tikkun olam activity. They will have a youth group advisor to lead discussions and planning of activities. If the 8th grade class is interested in just a once a month activity we can offer that too. I would encourage all eighth-grade students to come on the first Sunday at 11:30 for planning and evaluation of interest. A parent liaison would be beneficial to this group for tikkun olam activities

High School/Youth Group

This year we will continue to have no fees attached to high school youth group activities at CBS but donations are encouraged to help support the youth group advisors' wages. Congregation Beth Shalom is dedicated to promoting teen/youth involvement in our Jewish Community and supports this involvement by dropping all barriers to participation. Attendance at NFTY events has separate fees and those can be found on the NFTY/MV website. They will meet on Sundays from 11:30-12:30.

The goal of our high school program is to continue to make becoming a Jewish adult and active member of the community an important part of their high school years that will continue through adulthood. This class has always been learner directed and they have had lessons on Jewish comedy, Jews and the Comic book industry, comparative religion, Mysticism, ethics, social media, music, to name a few. At the beginning of each semester high school students have gotten together to determine what topics they might like to learn often from a mix of what topics they have brainstormed. An even stronger component of the returning high school student has been to have social interactions with their Jewish peers. Additionally, the relaxed atmosphere of youth group rather than the formal classroom environment has been more attractive to the teenagers.

The Youth Group will choose its leaders at the beginning of the year in such as president, vice president, social chair, religious activities chair, tikkun olam chair and so on. These roles have also been useful in rounding out a college application.

Our two advisors, Amanda Leventhal and Sam Powers have been actively involved with NFTY in high school and after graduation. Both have worked at camps this summer and are our music teachers. Kelly Durante will be the parent liaison helping to coordinate tikkun olam projects and activities.