

2021-2022 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 or eight have an additional two hours of Hebrew study per week.

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 read Hebrew with a basic understanding of liturgical Hebrew
- - 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 have a commitment to Jewish ethics and values
- - to be able to participate in religious services

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, 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, What's Jewish About Butterflies, Lets Discover Kindness Lessons 1-3 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 lesson topics 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'atzmaut, Shavuot and My Spring Holidays.

Jewish and Me Mitzvot series has the same format and similar teaching guide as the Holidays series. There are eight lesson folders to help preschoolers explore doing mitzvot. The lessons include Doing Mitzvot, Taking Care of Myself, Giving Tzedakah, Shalom Bayit, Being Kind, Helping Others Feel Better, Caring For Animals, and Protecting the Environment. The teacher guide also includes activities for enriching the classroom environment.

Let's Discover Kindness the first three folders will be done in this grade which include Kindness, Empathy, and Kindness to yourself. The 56-page teacher guide includes mindfulness, chavruta, lessons from the Torah, movement, and a family activity.

What's Jewish About Butterflies integrates Judaism into early childhood learning. There are thirty-six topics that are grounded in a Jewish context. Lessons on food, animals, all about me, books and authors incorporate Jewish values, traditions, Hebrew vocabulary, blessings, songs and making a connection with Israel. This grade will do approximately eight lessons from this book

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. Hebrew letters and order will be introduced using My Favorite Alef Bet Coloring Book. They will also learn some Shabbat prayers and songs in music.

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. These students will have music each week.

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.

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'Azmaut, Shavout: The Ten Commandments and Celebrating Shavout. The lessons include activities, movement and mindfulness, updated text, photos, and questions allowing students to discover their own connections to the holidays. The teacher's guide includes goals, objectives, and activities.

Let's Discover Mitzvot series is similar in format to the holiday curriculum. The folder titles are Tzedakah, Visit the Sick, Feed the Hungry, Save the Earth, Welcome Guests, Guard Your Tongue, and Talmud Torah. They learn that they are not just good deeds but commandments from the Torah.

Teach Me Torah has 16 lessons that teach Torah stories with a value lesson and reinforcement activity. Lessons include God and Creation, Adam and Eve, Noah, Tower of Babel, Abraham, Rebecca, Jacob and Esau, Joseph, Miriam and Moses, Moses and Pharaoh, the Israelites and God's laws, Ruth and Naomi, David and Goliath, Solomon, Jonah and Esther.

Let's Discover Kindness folders 4-6 will be done in this grade which include Gratitude, Respect and Acceptance. The 56-page teacher guide includes mindfulness, chavruta, lessons from the Torah, movement, and a family activity.

What's Jewish About Butterflies integrates Judaism into early childhood learning. There are thirty-six topics that are grounded in a Jewish context. Lessons on food, animals, all about me, books and authors incorporate Jewish values, traditions, Hebrew vocabulary, blessings, songs and making a connection with Israel. This grade will do approximately eight lessons from this book.

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 One and Two The classroom material is presented in a way that fosters this natural growth.

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.

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.

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.

Grade 3

Building Jewish Identity Volumes 1&2 – Volume 1 is Our Community and Volume 2 is Sacred Time. This series establishes a foundation for lifelong Jewish engagement. The curriculum introduces students to core experiences essential to a strong Jewish identity. Stories, interviews, and activities explore ethical teachings laws, language, rituals, symbols, and myths that create a distinctive Jewish worldview using a journal/activity format that invites personal reflection. Our Community explores how the history, stories, and practices of our community shape our identity. Sacred Time – The Jewish Calendar and Life Cycle identifies the ways in which identity comes from living actively according to Jewish time – Shabbat, the cycle of holidays. And life cycle events. It explores time as an important and sacred part of Jewish life.

Make Create and Celebrate Jewish Holidays uses art to help students connect with the underlying values of the holidays in a personal way.

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

Grades 4 and 5 Religious School class

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.

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

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

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. This opportunity to study comparative religion with Jewish peers is important to their identity, allowing them to explore differences and questions with their Jewish peers. 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.

Eizehu Gibor: Living Jewish Values is a different approach to teaching Jewish values. The students learn about Jewish values through Jewish role models telling their own stories.

Israel It's Complicated helps students understand and navigate the complex terrain of studying Israel and develop their own connection to the modern state. This text does not shy away from the nuances and complexities that Israel navigates. They explore the startup nation and pride in the technological advances. Experience Modern Israel will also be used in teaching Israel with Modern Israel online.

Additional Resources

Praying with our Feet – Clean Water active research and learning about the crisis of clean water in the world, impact on the people, mitzvot and connection to Torah Praying with our Feet- ending homelessness active learning about homelessness in the US, contributing factors, projects and connection to Torah Praying with our Feet- Feeding the Hungry lessons and research on the world crisis of hunger, toll in lives, mitzvot opportunities and connection to the Torah

Rabbi will meet with this class each Sunday for 30 -45 minutes.

This grade will have 30 minutes of music/t'fillah on Sunday.

Hebrew

Level I is the beginning level of Hebrew class that meets on Wednesday evening and Sunday morning. Students can start this level in third grade or later. Each Wednesday the Hebrew students lead a tefilah

service. Ot La –Ba'ot is the textbook 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, and connects Hebrew with ritual life. The teacher's guide also comes with a training DVD for the teacher. The prayers and songs in the textbook are the Shema, Bar'chu, Shehechianu, Adon Olam Leha dodi, Ein Keylocheynu, and Hatikva. A companion workbook is also used in the classroom.

Level II is offered to students who have successfully completed Level 1. The main text is Journeys Through the Siddur Friday Evenings which combines performing the prayers with mastering some of the language used in prayers along with providing students the 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. A workbook is also used in the classroom.

Level III/IV is offered to students who have successfully completed Levels I and II 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

Additional Hebrew Resources

Torah Aura Prayer Resource Pak – Barekhu, Shema, V'ahavta, Ma'ariv Aravim, Yotzer Or, Mi Kamokha, Avot/Avot V'imahot, G'vurot, K'dushah, Torah Blessings and Haftorah Blessings. T'fillah Making Prayers Meaningful, Journeys Through the Siddur Haggadah, Journeys Through the Siddur Shabbat at Home, S'Fatai Tiftah series. Behrman House – Hebrew in Harmony, Kol Yisrael-The Prayers of Our People, Shalom Ivrit-Welcome to Modern Hebrew, Hebrew Alive the Ulpan Way.

Grade 8/JYG Eight graders will have the opportunity for madrichim in training on Sundays from 9:30-11:30. Those who complete the training will be given priority for a madrichim position. Eighth graders will also lead the JYG (grades 6-8) with a goal of once-a-month social or tikkun olam events. Eighth graders may meet with high school youth group on the remaining Sundays of the month. This will be a building year for junior youth group. They will have a youth group advisor to lead discussions and planning of activities. A parent liaison would be beneficial to this group for tikkun olam activities.

High School/Youth Group 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. Many of the returning high school student do so 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. They will plan social activities and tikkun olam projects. These roles have also been useful in rounding out a

college application. They will have an advisor and parent liaison helping to coordinate tikkun olam projects and activities.