
אבגדהוזהטיפכך לממנוסעפפףצקששת

Nezvesky School for Jewish Education



Congregation Adath Israel

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Congregation Adath Israel

Nezvesky School for Jewish Education

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Dear Religious School Families:

Welcome to the Nezvesky School for Jewish Education at Congregation Adath Israel of Newtown. The goals for our students are to build an association with their Judaic heritage and instill in them the value of lifelong learning.

Our education program extends from preschool through seventh grade.

In addition to being age-appropriate, our curriculum is developed to motivate students to ensure they thrive. We go beyond the textbooks -- and support book knowledge with fun activities, social and community events that our families can engage in as well. By using this approach, we are creating a positive, relevant learning environment that brings students' interests into their educational experience and enables them to develop a lasting interest in Judaism.

Younger students are offered a special music program each week filled with laughter, clapping, singing and dancing. We round out the program with art projects and crafts often associated with holidays. We use music to teach the Hebrew alphabet (Alef Bet) and the Jewish holidays.

As the students reach the upper grades, we encourage class discussions on core Jewish values in an open and safe environment. We want our students to explore their own spiritual questions, convictions, curiosities and challenges.

Once again, we welcome you to our community and congratulate you for giving your child the precious gift of a quality and meaningful Jewish education.

Please feel free to reach out if you would like to become better acquainted or have questions.

Sincerely,

The Education Committee:

Rabbi Barukh Schectman - rabbi@congadathisrael.org or 860-227-0912

David Smith - Education Chairperson - educationchair@congadathisrael.org

The Teachers of Adath Israel

GOALS of ADATH ISRAEL'S
NEZVESKY SCHOOL FOR JEWISH EDUCATION

The religious school's curriculum has been designed to accomplish the following goals:

To instill in our students a sense of their roles and responsibilities in participating in our Jewish community.

To provide our students with the opportunity to explore the roles of G-d, holiness and our Jewish ethical system in their lives.

To provide our students with a comprehensive understanding of, and appreciation for, the observance of Shabbat, Jewish holidays and Jewish life-cycle events.

To provide our students with a Hebrew program which focuses on gaining a working knowledge of grammar and Siddur vocabulary to build fluency and confidence as they participate in Jewish worship services.

To provide our students with a fundamental knowledge of the Biblical narrative and an appreciation for textual interpretation and the relevance of the Torah to their own lives.

To instill in our students a sense of the scope and continuity of Jewish history.

To provide our students with the opportunity to develop a relationship to the land and state of Israel.

To instill a value of lifelong learning and provide our families with the opportunity for in-school Jewish family education to help them make Judaism an integral part of their family life.

SCHOOL HOURS

Sunday:

Conversational Hebrew	9:00 AM – 9:45 AM
Kindergarten thru Grade 7	9:30 AM – 11:45 AM

Weekdays:

Wednesday Hebrew School: Grades 4, 5, 6 & 7 4:30 PM – 6:15 PM

TARDINESS POLICY

It is expected that children will arrive promptly so that they will be in their class, ready to begin at their scheduled times listed above. It creates a disruption and lack of continuity in our program when your child is tardy. Please adhere to the above schedule.

If your child is going to be more than 15 minutes late, the teacher must be notified or call the synagogue and leave a message on the answering machine (203-426-5188).

DISMISSAL POLICY

Please pick up your child from school at their scheduled dismissal time. Please notify the school if you are going to be late. Since chronic lateness is a hardship on the teachers, if lateness persists, parents will be required to meet with the Rabbi, the education chairperson and the teacher to come up with a solution to this problem.

Please park and come into the building to pick up your child(ren). Children in grades K – 3 will be dismissed from their classrooms on the lower level. Children in grades 4 – 7 will be dismissed from the sanctuary. You are welcome to sit in on the song and prayer part of the upper school class in the sanctuary from 11:15 – 11:45. Please enter through the upstairs doors as the lower doors will be locked.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

During the week, Hebrew School classes will be cancelled if Newtown Schools are closed or have an early dismissal. On Sundays, in the event of inclement weather, you will be notified by e-mail if there is a cancellation. Please be sure you are signed up for the “school” e-mail list.

Cancellations will also be listed on the following TV stations and their websites:

WTNH News Channel 8 or www.wtnh.com
NBC (WVIT) Channel 6 or www.nbcconnecticut.com
WFSB Channel 3 or www.wfsb.com

Closings will also be posted on our synagogue website. Always check 2 sources, sometimes cancellation listings don't get through on the internet or TV right away or e-mail can be down.

NUMBER OF SCHOOL DAYS PER YEAR

In order to provide our students with the best possible education we feel it necessary to set a minimum number of days in which classes must be in session each year. The numbers of days are as follows:

- Sunday school classes (these are actual teaching days, not special program days) will have a minimum of 25 days.
- Weekday Hebrew classes will have a minimum of 30 days.

If for any unforeseen circumstances, a school day needs to be cancelled, it will only be made up at the end of the school year if the total number of days in session falls short of the minimum. Classes typically begin after Labor Day in September and conclude the first weekend of June. If any class needs to be extended, it will continue into June but will always conclude before the last day of Newtown's public school schedule.

To avoid extra days at the end of the year, some holiday services, if well attended by the students, may apply to the weekday count of classes.

ATTENDANCE & STUDENT EVALUATION

Students must be in attendance for a minimum of three-quarters of the scheduled sessions per marking period. Good attendance and preparedness are an absolute must if children are to benefit from their studies at religious school. **We kindly ask for your full cooperation in ensuring that your child has a good attendance record and comes to class with the proper books, notebook, pen or pencil and completed homework assignments.** Please notify us if your child will be absent for an extended period of time.

Report cards are issued in January and June. A formal time for Parent / Teacher conferences will be set up in January. You may always request additional information from the Teacher, Rabbi or Education Chairperson at a time convenient for all.

We are committed to handling your concerns with the utmost confidentiality and sensitivity. If you have any questions at any time, please speak directly with your child's teacher. Working in the classroom directly with your children, teachers are a great resource and are there to help you with your concerns. If necessary, you may also contact the Education Chairperson or the Rabbi.

HOMEWORK

Meaningful education requires review and reinforcement of new skills. The purpose of the homework is for continuity from one lesson to the next. To this end, your children's teachers will be assigning homework on a regular basis. Homework assignments vary from grade to grade and at the teacher's discretion and will generally take no longer than approximately 15 minutes for your child to complete in the early grades. A more intensive need for at home work may be required as your child prepares for B'nai Mitzvah. Your child's active review, especially in his or her Hebrew language studies, will reinforce the work done with the teacher in the classroom.

SCHOOL FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are a very important part of your child's education. Local field trips (such as those to nursing homes or to someone's home to bake holiday treats) are usually during weekday class time. Field trips to further locations such as New York City are typically scheduled for a Sunday morning so that entire families may join in, if so desired.

All children are expected to attend the field trip with their class. The field trips to New York will usually have some cost involved. If this is a financial hardship for you, please speak to the treasurer so arrangements can be worked out.

CLASS LUNCHESES, DINNERS & HOLIDAYS

Each student will also attend one Shabbat dinner and one luncheon as part of their school curriculum. Families should also attend the service as well as the luncheon or dinner... the service and meals are part of the child's class experience. Please see first day of school handout or calendar for dates.

A holiday is also assigned to each grade to sponsor. The assigned grade is responsible for bringing in the requested refreshments, setting up and cleaning up. Your class room parent will contact you to coordinate what each family will bring. Each family in the class should help with their assigned holiday whether they will be present or not. Helping with a holiday celebration is part of the child's and parent's classroom experience. A suggested menu is included in the appendix at the back of this handbook for your convenience. All lunches, dinners and class holidays are noted on the calendar.

SNACKS

Please send your child to school with a small healthy snack on Sundays, which they may eat during a 10 minute classroom snack time. There will also be a 10-minute break on Wednesday afternoons. All food sent in must be kosher (dairy or pareve). No meat or soda products are allowed. Some suggestions are fruit, cereal, yogurt, crackers, pretzels and a beverage.

Prior to snack time, all teachers will ask their students to wash their hands for sanitary reasons. No students are permitted to help themselves to food or beverages in the refrigerator. If there are leftover snacks from an oneg or event and a teacher wishes to offer it to their class, then the teacher is responsible for getting the snack and making sure their students clean up after themselves.

ATTENDANCE AT SERVICES

Friday Family Services: The first Friday of each month is typically designated as our Family Service Night in which there are two services to choose from, as noted below. As part of a continuing effort to educate your children in Jewish traditions, it is expected that all children and parent(s) will attend. Please check the current calendar on the website for exact dates. There will be a list on the door inside the Rabbi's office for the 4th, 5th, 6th & 7th grade students to write in the dates they attended services.

- Shabbat Before Bedtime – This service runs from 6:00 – 6:45 pm and is structured for our younger students. Join us for a joyous, raucous, percussion and dance filled 45 minutes as we welcome Shabbat. Young and young at heart – all are welcome. Birthday books for the month will be distributed. Then we parade together into the social hall where we sing a Kiddush over grape juice, a Motzi over Challah and have a few extra treats besides. Then on to bed! Once a year there will be a school dinner before this service.
- 7:30pm Shabbat Service – This service runs about 1 hour 15 min. For those who want a more traditional service and for children in the upper grades studying for Bar and Bat Mitzvah. Birthday books for the month will also be distributed to Religious School students at this service. Once a year there will be a school dinner before this service.

These services are held as a way to gradually expose all students to the routines, rituals and prayers included in Jewish services. Children will participate in these services according to Grade level. It is an environment to start building friendships among classmates and extend classroom learning into practice in the sanctuary. Students will be able to join the Rabbi on the bima to help lead the congregation in prayer and song. During the Friday Family Services, school children who celebrate birthdays during the month are honored with a gift from our Sisterhood.

Saturday Services: Full Shabbat morning services will typically be held one Saturday of each month from September through June. These services begin at 9:30 am. A second morning service in the month will be scheduled as a "Learning Service" for the B'nai Mitzvah class and all others who wish to attend. Sixth graders are encouraged to begin attending these practice sessions. Learning Services are one and a half hours long and take place on the bima. Students and parents will be practicing the choreography of the Torah Service, as well as reviewing the prayers. Please check the synagogue calendar on the website for dates of these services. A school luncheon will be scheduled once a year after a Saturday morning service.

As part of the 4th, 5th & 6th grade curriculum, each student is expected to attend at least one Saturday morning service a year in addition to their class service / luncheon. This would be a service of your own choosing, but not one in which a Bar or Bat Mitzvah is scheduled. Parents should attend with their child, sit with them and help them to follow along through parts of the service.

Bar and Bat Mitzvah Students: As part of the B'nai Mitzvah program, each student must attend 2 Friday evening and at least 1 and preferably both Saturday morning services per

month beginning one year prior to the Bar / Bat Mitzvah for a total of 24 Friday and 15 to 20 Saturday services for the year. This expectation is intended to help our B'nai Mitzvah students be comfortably prepared for their ceremonies. If there are conflicts that prohibit meeting this requirement, please discuss them with Rabbi Schectman. Shabbat services are a family event and the presence of the whole family at services is what is desired. When that is not possible, the presence of at least one parent is required. Attendance will be taken. Please make sure you check off the dates you attend on the chart in the Rabbi's office.

DRESS CODE

All those attending services should be dressed appropriately. Jeans and t-shirts are discouraged and bare shoulders should be covered with a sweater or shawl.

CODE OF CONDUCT & BEHAVIOIR POLICY

It is our goal to provide an environment based on respect for the rights and dignity of every person. Students have the right to attend school without being subjected to harassment of any nature. This right also extends to siblings, parents, congregants, faculty, staff, and visitors to the synagogue.

There are certain behaviors which, if tolerated, could undermine the type of environment to which Adath Israel congregants, students, and staff are entitled.

Students should not behave in a way that mocks or insults someone's social status, handicap, intelligence, race, ethnic heritage, culture, religion or family -- areas that are too personally sensitive to be the subject of "joking" or "fooling around." This is more than common courtesy; it is a tenet of Jewish teachings and tradition.

We expect all students to understand that such behaviors as hitting, bullying, threatening, or stealing are not acceptable and will be dealt with swiftly and appropriately. In accordance with Connecticut State Law, students are specifically prohibited from bringing any weapons or other "dangerous devices" to the school. In addition, we ask that students not wear clothes or accessories that are vulgar, insensitive, or otherwise distracting or disruptive to the educational process.

We cannot overemphasize the important role that students' families play in meeting these high standards. We encourage your support of these goals and welcome the opportunity to discuss any questions or concerns you may have.

Additional building rules:

- No running in the building
- No hide and seek
- No outside recess unless under constant teacher supervision.
- No food or drink in the sanctuary.
- Always clean up after yourself.
- Alert an adult immediately if you observe any problems or questionable activity by adults or children.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Learning is best in an interactive environment of mutual respect. Therefore, classroom discipline is essential. Each class will have its own set of behavior guidelines set by the teacher, or, by the teacher and the students jointly.

The goal is for our students to follow the basic rules of good behavior, as outlined above, without question. As discussed in detail below, when a child's behavior affects the learning ability of the student or has an adverse effect on the classroom experience, procedures will be followed.

1. The first time a student is disruptive or does not comply with the classroom policy, the teacher will speak with the student and discuss appropriate and expected behavior privately.
2. If a student is further disruptive, the teacher must notify the parents, Rabbi and Education Chairperson, who will discuss the behavior and develop a plan for a more successful learning experience with the student and family.
3. If the student's behavior continues to interfere with classroom learning, a conference will be arranged between the teacher, Rabbi, Education Chairperson and the family and a written plan for success will be developed and followed.

CONGREGATION ADATH ISRAEL'S
NEZVESKY SCHOOL FOR JEWISH EDUCATION

CURRICULUM GUIDELINES

Kindergarten - Third Grade

This program creates a foundation of Jewish experiences with instruction in Hebrew, culture and Torah through crafts, songs, stories and in class observance of the holidays. Children and families form bonds with each other and share their family experiences, integrate Jewish language, rituals and holidays. Children are also introduced to Jewish leadership skills within society such as Tikkun Olam (taking care of the world) and helping those in need through Tzedakah, get well cards, helping others, and gift baskets.

The following holidays are taught in season: Shabbat, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Simchat Torah, Chanukah, Tu B'Shevat, Purim, Passover, Yom Ha'atzma'ut (Independence Day), Lag B'Omer and Shavuot.

The primary grades meet once a week on Sunday mornings.

Fourth - Seventh Grades

This program focuses on preparation for Bar and Bat Mitzvahs and Jewish living with courses in Hebrew, Jewish history, ritual, Torah, Israel and modern global politics. This program includes participation in services and public speaking as well as discussion and debate. It complements the B'nai Mitzvah program for Seventh Grades so that the children get a well-rounded Jewish education and can stand up for their Jewish Heritage as they enter adulthood.

The secondary grades meet both on Sunday mornings and one afternoon a week.

Please see the following pages for curriculum for each individual grade.

Kindergarten

Our main goal is to make Jewish learning fun by interactive teaching and integrating a variety of activities such as stories, songs, music, dance and crafts into the learning process.

Jewish Holidays - Stories and instruction focus on what we do on the particular holiday at home, in the synagogue and at school.

Food and Blessings - Food and blessings associated with the holiday are highlighted.

Shabbat - Shabbat instruction includes blessings over the wine, challah and candles. The students will also learn the first line of the Shema.

Aleph bet - The children are introduced to the Hebrew alphabet. They learn age appropriate Hebrew words associated with the letters learned.

Jewish Symbols - The students become familiar with the following symbols: tzedakah box, mezzuzah, havdalah candle, spice box, challah cover, candlesticks, Star of David, etc.

Teacher Resources:

Jewish Holidays & Crafts

First Grade

The first grade class builds on the foundation presented in kindergarten. The goal is to help the children understand and begin to personalize the Jewish aspects of their lives. We do this by exploring various themes of Jewish life:

Jewish Holidays - The holidays and ways in which Jewish people celebrate them continue to be presented in a variety of fun and entertaining ways; stories, songs, music, dance, crafts, handouts, field trips, etc. The holidays are explored through class discussion and experiential learning. The relevance of Shabbat is discussed at length.

Biblical Characters and Bible Stories - Bible stories are integrated into the context of Jewish Holidays.

Aleph bet - The Hebrew letters introduced in Kindergarten are reviewed. The children learn to recognize, recite and write the aleph bet, sequentially.

Hebrew Vocabulary - Various Hebrew words are incorporated into the classroom vocabulary. The students learn to recognize and recite basic words such as colors, numbers to 14, days of the week, months of the year, etc.

Blessings - The children learn to recite basic blessings for Shabbat (candles, wine bread), Havdalah (candle, spices), Chanukah (candles) and Passover (4 questions).

Talmud Torah (Jewish Learning) - The children learn to understand Jewish Ethical Teachings. The students learn that a lasting commitment to Jewish learning can be a source of meaning and connection. Through classroom discussions and activities such as role-playing the students begin to personalize these themes. Specifically, these values include mitzvot (commandments) such as tzedakah (righteous giving), ma'achil re'eivim (feeding those who are hungry), Dereck Eretz (treating people with respect), and visiting the sick.

Texts and Teacher Resources:

Kadimah! Get Ready For Hebrew

Second Grade

In second grade, the concepts taught in the previous grades are reinforced and expanded upon. The Hebrew lessons evolve from letter recognition to reading entire words.

Various aspects of being Jewish are introduced and discussed. The children also begin to internalize many of the Jewish teachings by relating them to their own lives.

Throughout, a variety of teaching methods are used to reinforce these topics, including class discussion, games and crafts. Areas of study include:

Alef Bet - The Hebrew letters are reviewed out-of-order and many vocabulary words beginning with each letter are introduced. The students learn the vowels and begin to put letters and vowels together to make words. By the end of the year, they can read most simple vocabulary words and know the significance of many of them.

Hebrew Vocabulary - Many beginning conversational Hebrew words are introduced in second grade. Many of them stem from the Hebrew reading lessons as well as discussions about the holidays and observances in the synagogue. The children also learn numbers to 50, colors, months, days of the week and the names of the books in the Torah.

Holidays - All of the major Jewish holidays are discussed, including the story behind each holiday, its significance (both historical and contemporary), its symbols and rituals. Students are encouraged to share their traditions with the class and discuss the relevance of the holiday to their lives. Concepts are reinforced through class discussion, blessings, stories, activities and crafts.

Blessings, Prayers and Songs - The blessings learned in Kindergarten and first grade are reviewed. These include the blessings for Shabbat (candles, wine, challah), Havdalah, Chanukah and Passover. The children also learn many of the prayers which are part of the Friday night and Saturday morning services. Several Hebrew and Israeli songs are also introduced.

Talmud Torah (Jewish Learning) - In second grade, students begin to apply Jewish teachings to their own lives. They explore various aspects of Jewish life, including the activities in and significance of the synagogue, the Jewish symbols in their daily lives, and the mitzvot that they are expected to follow. In addition, each week we read a biblical story or folk tale that contains a (sometimes hidden) moral. Students are encouraged to seek out the moral and discuss the ways it applies to their own lives.

Texts and Teacher Resources:

Z'man Likro: Time to Read Hebrew – Book 1

Let's Explore Being Jewish

My Jewish Year

Note: In years when 2nd & 3rd grade classes are combined, alternate books may be used.

Third Grade

In third grade, the students continue to build upon their knowledge of the Hebrew letters, holidays and prayers. By the end of the year, students will be able to read Hebrew slowly - and they will have been introduced to over 200 prayer words.

Hebrew - Students use a basic primer to review letters, vowels, words and numbers introduced in second grade. Lesson builds upon lesson, providing reinforcement as students develop siddur reading skills. Selected siddur words are presented with English translations, establishing a foundation for prayer comprehension.

Holidays - Holidays continue to be discussed in season.

Blessings, Prayers and Songs - In addition to reinforcing what was learned in previous grades, new age appropriate holiday songs, prayers and blessings are taught.

Bible - Students learn stories from the Torah using a simplified textbook. Discussion of stories includes how lessons learned are applicable to their lives today. The third graders learn to understand *Peshat* - "What does it mean?", *Drash* - "What does it teach?" and *Remez* - "A Lesson about Torah". Through stories, the students are introduced to the patriarchs, with an emphasis on Abraham and his family. Jewish legends, which teach morals and ethics, are presented along with customs and rituals of Jewish life.

Ethics - The third grade students will explore the moral lessons of the Ten Commandments with timeless stories from the Bible, Talmud, and Jewish folklore. Presented in child-friendly, everyday English, each commandment is accompanied by hands-on activities to help students integrate the lessons into their own lives.

Texts and Teacher Resources:

Z'man Likro: Time to Read Hebrew – Book 2
Explorer's Bible, Vol. 1 – Creation to Exodus

Note: In years when 2nd & 3rd grade classes are combined, alternate books may be used.

Fourth Grade

In fourth grade the learning of the Hebrew language is more extensive. The students receive their own Siddurs during a Friday night family service, on the night of the fourth grade class dinner. Holidays are discussed in greater depth than previously taught. An introduction to the early prophets is presented. The history of Judaism is discussed and how it evolved into a religion and way of life. Students learn how the people gave relevance and reverence to a Supreme Being. We once again emphasize how Judaism relates to us as individuals and to the extended family. We use current events in our family, our school and our neighborhood to depict how we can be better Jews as well as better people in the broad sense.

Hebrew - Students become more familiar with Hebrew phrases as they are put into sentences and interpreted. Hebrew is now taught with an emphasis on fluent reading and comprehension.

Blessings, Prayers and Songs - The fourth grade students continue to reinforce the blessings, songs and prayers learned thus far. Specific prayers include Modeh, Brachot, Brahot shel Mitzvah, Brahot shel Shabbat, Kiddush, Havdalah, Brachot shel Yom Tov, Mah Nishtanah, Barakat HaMazon. T'fila (special prayers) are presented with an explanation of their meanings.

Biblical & Modern History - We begin by exploring the earliest prominent Biblical figures such as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and Moses. We then move onto King David, King Solomon and the great temples of Jerusalem. We then explore Judaism after the destruction of the Temple, the formation of Rabbinical Judaism and the modern day Synagogue as a center for spiritual study and worship. The great legends and parables of the Talmud help us define the meaning of what it is to be Jewish and what responsibilities we accept as Jews in modern times. Both ancient and modern history is taught using textbooks, timelines and photos. Through discussion of classical Torah texts, students gain an understanding of the challenges, ethical dilemmas and moral issues that faced the Jewish people throughout history as well as an appreciation for how such challenges and ethical dilemmas affect us in our own daily lives.

Geography - A look at the world and where Israel is in proximity to other important places is displayed, with maps, photos and printed material.

Holidays - Discussions focus on how we observe the holidays, the historical context of how they are observed, their true meaning, the main characters and religious artifacts that go with each holiday.

Jewish Living - Discussions focus on how we should conduct ourselves as Jews at home, at school and at play; so that we can be proud of ourselves and our heritage.

Texts and Teacher Resources:

Z'man L'Tefilah: The Time for Prayer Program Book 1: Brachot (Sunday & Wednesday)
Explorer's Bible, Vol. 2- From Sinai to the Nation of Israel or Jewish Holidays (Sunday)
Welcome to Israel or Count Me In (Wednesday)

Note: In years when 4th & 5th grade classes are combined, alternate years will use alternate books.

Fifth Grade

In fifth grade we work on expanding and strengthening each student's Hebrew vocabulary and reading skills. The students gain a more in depth view of Jewish living and customs. A close look at modern Israel as the land of our people is discussed at length. Students learn about the historic context and symbolism of Holiday traditions and laws. The spiritual message is made clearer to the students at this age.

Hebrew - The fifth grade class continues to work on and refine their reading and grammar skills. Students are introduced to Trope Chanting of Torah and Haftorah. The Torah service is rehearsed in class. Students gain a greater understanding of the specific content and sequence of the service. They also become accustomed to their Hebrew names and how they are called up to the Torah for an Aliyah.

Blessings, Prayers and Songs - Students learn the translation and meaning of songs as well as the first paragraph in the Shma Ve'ahavta. Students are expected to memorize this paragraph. The prayers learned in fourth grade will continue to be refined as additional prayers are introduced according to each student's ability. Additional prayers include Bar'chu, Yotzer Or/ Ma'ariv Arvim Mi Chamochah, Avot V'imahot, G'vurot, K'dushah, Rav Shalom, Sim Shalom, Oseh Shalom

Holidays - Holidays are discussed in the context of when and where they occurred on the timeline of world history. The specifics of how each holiday is celebrated and observed is explored in the context of students soon having such responsibilities after their B'nai Mitzvah. Students gain greater awareness of the various streams of Judaism and the way that different families and types of Jews observe Judaism.

Biblical & Modern History - Both ancient and modern history are studied. Significant emphasis is placed on knowing the Biblical characters, including the family tree of Abraham, which was first introduced in the fourth grade. Each lesson gives special emphasis on what comprises the Tanach and the meaning of each component. Classical Torah legends, historical facts and parables are referenced to help define the meaning of each aspect of our studies. The history of Zionism and the modern state of Israel is studied. The lives of modern Jewish historical figures such as Theodore Herzl, David Ben-Gurion, Golda Meir, and more recent Israeli leaders are at the center of this study. The aim is to instill knowledge and pride for Israel and the Jewish people.

Jewish Living - We discuss and read about Jewish values and how it refines our sense of morality, our sense of fair play and our overall behavior and identity in today's society. We discuss real life situations that help us better understand the stories read in class. We discuss Mitzvot and why and how we should react to acts of kindness.

Texts and Teacher Resources:

Z'man L'Tefilah: The Time for Prayer Program Book 2: Sh'ma (Sunday & Wednesday)
Jewish Holidays or Explorer's Bible Vol 2 (Sunday)
Count Me In or Welcome to Israel (Wednesday)
Siddur (Sunday & Wednesday)

Note: In years when 4th & 5th grade classes are combined, alternate years will use alternate books.

Sixth Grade

Students discuss Jewish ethics, morals and laws. A small section of the parsha Hashavuah (portion of the week) is read and discussed in both Hebrew and English. Current events such as anti-Semites, race relations, Holocaust reparations, Israeli politics and more are discussed as well as what it means to be Jewish in a Christian nation. Customs and holidays continue to be discussed at greater length.

Hebrew - Emphasis is on increasing fluency in Hebrew reading. Proper grammar is stressed. Lessons are continued in Haftorah Trope Chanting.

Blessings, Prayers and Songs - Many blessings and prayers are read and translated. The prayers and blessings introduced in 4th and 5th grade continue with emphasis on greater fluency and pronunciation. The translation of the Shma Ve'ahavta is reviewed and committed to memory. Specific prayers introduced include Ein Kamocha, Kee Mitsiyon, Birchot Ha'Torah, V'zot Ha'Torah, Birchot Hahaftarah, Eitz Hayyim Hi, Aleinu, Kaddish, Ein Keloheinu, Adon Olam.

Holidays - Studies of the holidays focus on the main characters, the main religious artifacts used for each holiday, the historical setting of each of the holidays, such as Purim in Persia and Chanukah in Greek times, Passover in Egyptian times and their sequence on a time line.

Judaic Studies - Students are introduced to the Talmud as the Oral Law and the Torah, Nevim and Ketuvim (Tenach) as the written law. The Torah as a code of law that has democratic principles as well as theological principles is presented. The role of Greece and Ancient Israel with their respective influences on our current Western civilization are explored. The existence and the formation of the Modern State of Israel is a big part of classroom discussions.

Jewish Identity - The sixth graders explore their Jewish identity in terms of their grandparents and great-grandparents and where they came from. The history of Jews from ancient times, the social standing of Jews throughout history and where we are now in our quest for freedom is discussed. Zionist concepts, the founding of the state of Israel, the yearning for Zion in liturgy and discussion of events in the world as they pertain to us as people and as Jews are topics of discussion.

Current Events -

Articles from the New York Times and from various other media that relate to Israel and the Jewish people are discussed.

Texts and Teacher Resources:

Why Be Different (Sunday) New
York Times (Sunday)
Siddur (Wednesday)

Seventh Grade

Hebrew reading and comprehension continues this year. A general overview of ancient history to present time Israel is discussed. Review and more in depth discussions on Jewish history from the Holocaust to the present is taught in this grade. A field trip to the Jewish Heritage Museum in NYC is the highlight. Another theme in 7th grade is understanding prayers and our present-day synagogue services. The order of the service is also studied. The classroom activities include student lead discussions, current events, and games. The focus of this class is looking at our history, and prayers, and recognizing how they impact on our personal lives and how our interactions with the people in our community is enriched from our studies. Students prepare for their bar/bat mitzvahs.

Hebrew - In addition to regular classes, students meet individually with the Rabbi on a weekly basis to help prepare for their bar/bat mitzvahs. Areas covered in this tutorial are: Haftorah and Torah Trope melody, speech writing and presentation and instruction on donning the tefillin.

Prayer - Students will be exposed to the basic elements of prayer; why one prays, when and where does one pray, and what is a Jewish prayer. The goal is to develop a deeper understanding of prayer. The three subject areas studied are G*d, Prayer, and the Shema. Each subject is discussed and translations are reviewed to help connect and decode familiar Hebrew words and phrases. We also identify the artifacts in today's sanctuary with those of the ancient temples of Jerusalem. Two prayers of love (Avat Olam and Ahavah Rabbah) are reviewed with the intent of emphasizing our love for one another and G*d's love for His people. The Amidah is also studied in an in-depth fashion. Each blessing is studied for its meaning and purpose. Torah Service and Concluding Prayers are also studied in the same manner.

History - We discuss the history of the Jewish People from ancient times to the present day with special emphasis on the strategies used by Jews to survive in different cultures and environments. Role playing, debates and discussions are used to help the students discover their own voices as they participate in our discovery of Jewish History. In the course of our history, we also discuss the growth of the religious service as we know it today and how different practices became traditional over time so that the students can make the traditions their own as they become Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

Jewish Identity - The student's social identity as Jews is discussed in a casual and supportive environment focusing on their own feelings about their Judaic faith and identity.

Mitzvot - Students are encouraged to give back to the community by performing mitzvot.

Texts and Teacher Resources: The
Big Picture (Sunday)
Siddur & B'nai Mitzvah Notebooks (Wednesday)

Bar and Bat Mitzvah Preview

Introduction

A Bar / Bat Mitzvah is a special event for not only the child, but also the parents, siblings, grandparents, other relatives and friends. At Adath Israel, the Rabbi and the Ritual Committee are committed to make the Bar / Bat Mitzvah a memorable, enjoyable experience with the hope that this is the beginning of the child's deeper quest for knowledge of his or her Jewish roots. The following is intended as a checklist for parents and students.

Requirements for Eligibility

The skills and academic requirements of our B'nai Mitzvah are as follows:

1. Ability to read unfamiliar Hebrew words at a fairly fluent pace.
2. Knowledge and ability to lead major sections of Friday and Saturday Shabbat services.
3. Knowledge of Jewish holidays, observances, prayers, history and culture as covered in our school curriculum.
4. Minimum of 5 years of Jewish education or equivalent. In our school, children in kindergarten through third grade meet once a week (Sundays). After third grade, students begin attending Hebrew school twice a week. Prior to entering the fourth grade, each student will be evaluated so that the Rabbi, Education Committee and the Ritual Committee may know the standing of the student and whether or not additional private tutorials, at the expense of the family, will be necessary to keep the student up to our required academic standards. This also pertains to any new student entering our Hebrew school program in grades 4 through 7.
5. A B'nai Mitzvah is both a celebration and a religious rite of passage for our youngsters. It is an affirmation of Jewish faith. As such, every B'nai Mitzvah candidate must be Jewish. Our Halachic standards are of Conservative Judaism which for our purposes simply state: A child whose mother was Jewish at the time they were born is Jewish. A child whose mother was not Jewish at the time they were born is presumed to be Jewish but may need further considerations to confirm their Jewish identity. If this is a matter that pertains to you, please be in touch with the Rabbi.

B'nai Mitzvah Date Selection

There will be a parent meeting in the spring of your child's 5th grade year to discuss bar /bat mitzvah preparation and date selection. A more detailed guideline will be handed out to parents at this meeting. No dates shall be selected or agreed upon prior to this meeting. After a date has been requested, you will receive a letter from the administrative office confirming this date. The date should not be considered final until this letter is received.

FRIDAY FAMILY SHABBAT DINNER

Suggested Menu - serves 30 people

Any kosher dairy dish is acceptable

2 DOZEN EGGS (Egg Salad)

3 LARGE CANS OF WHITE TUNA (Tuna Salad)

1 LARGE TOSSED SALAD (salad dressing on the side)

1 LARGE FRUIT SALAD

BAKED SALMON

1 NOODLE PUDDINGS OR 2 TRAYS ZITI

1 DOZEN BLINTZES

1 CHALLAH FOR DINNER, 1 CHALLAH FOR SERVICE

1 STICK BUTTER

3 BOTTLES OF JUICE (at least 1 should be purple grape juice) (all should be 100% fruit juice)

OTHER BEVERAGES - NO SODA PLEASE

1 QUART MILK

1 LARGE BOTTLE OF KOSHER WINE

DESSERT: Families attending also provide the dessert for the oneg after the service. In addition to your meal contribution, please bring 1 dessert item. (cake, cookies, brownies, pie or healthier choices are welcome).

NO NUTS, please!

SATURDAY YOUTH SERVICE LUNCHEON

Suggested menu – serves 30 people

Please adjust amounts to the number of people attending

Any kosher dairy dish is acceptable – you can make your own menu

2 DOZEN EGGS (Egg Salad)

3 LARGE CANS OF WHITE TUNA (Tuna Salad)

2 DOZEN BAGELS (Sliced)

2 (8 OZ.) PACKAGES OF CREAM CHEESE

2 STICKS BUTTER

LARGE TOSSED SALAD (salad dressing on the side)

GEFILTE FISH

3 BOTTLES OF JUICE (at least 1 should be purple grape juice)
(all should be 100% fruit juice)

Other Beverages, if desired (No soda, please)

1 QUART MILK

CHEESE & CRACKERS (optional)

LARGE CHALLAH

KOSHER WINE – small bottle

COFFEE

DESSERT: ***Each family must bring one dessert in addition to their meal contribution.
Suggestions are: Fruit salad, cookies, cake, brownies, pies, etc.

NO NUTS, please!

MENU FOR TU B'SHEVAT SEDER

(Menu for 40 to 50 - includes students, teachers, teacher helpers and parent helpers)

JUICE: WHITE GRAPE JUICE AND PURPLE GRAPE JUICE

(Each child will get 4 small cups of juice – figure about a total of 10 oz. of juice per student / teacher)
The first cup is white juice, the second is white mixed with a very small amount of purple juice, the third is white mixed with a little more purple and the fourth is all purple.

Please note: you will need more white grape juice than purple grape juice. It is easiest to mix the 2nd and 3rd juice mixtures in a pitcher.

(4 bottles white grape juice; 2 bottles purple grape juice)

FRUIT WITH A HARD (INEDIBLE) OUTER SHELL: ALMONDS, WALNUTS, BANANAS, PINEAPPLE, POMEGRANATE

(nuts should only be served if there are no children with nut allergies)

Please purchase one type of the fruits/nuts above and cut up into pieces for the Seder participants. Keep one whole fruit/nut for the Seder leader to show the participants.

FRUIT WITH AN (INEDIBLE) INNER PIT: CHERRIES, PEACHES, PLUMS, APRICOTS, OLIVES OR DATES

Please purchase one type of the fruit above and cut up into pieces for the Seder participants. Keep one whole fruit for the Seder leader to show the participants.

FRUIT WITH BOTH AN INEDIBLE OUTER SHELL AND INNER PIT: AVOCADO, COCONUT OR ORANGE

Please purchase one type of the fruit above and cut up into pieces for the Seder participants. Keep one whole fruit for the Seder leader to show the participants.

FRUIT THAT IS ENTIRELY EATEN: SEEDLESS GRAPES, BLUEBERRIES, STRAWBERRIES, FIGS OR RAISINS

Please purchase one type of the fruit above for the Seder participants. Each participant and the Seder leader should be given a few pieces of this fruit.

WHEAT CRACKERS: SOMETHING LIKE WHEAT THINS BUT THEY MUST BE KOSHER.

Figure 3 to 5 crackers per participant. (Number of boxes needed will be determined by size of box purchased – probably 2 or 3 boxes)

If you want – try to also get some of the additional fruits that the children may be unfamiliar with such as Carob, Pomegranate and Figs.

PASSOVER MODEL SEDER

(Menu for 40 to 50 – includes students, teachers, teacher helpers and parent helpers)

MATZO: 3 lbs. (3 boxes)

EGGS: You need 1 per child / teacher / teacher helper / parent helper (about 50)

MACAROONS: Enough for each child / teacher / teacher helper / parent helper

GRAPE JUICE: 4 bottles

APPLE JUICE: 2 bottles

CELERY: 2 bunches cut into pieces and placed on each plate and on Seder plate.

PARSLEY: One bunch - Small piece per child and for Seder plate.

SALT WATER: 2 small bowls or cups per table.

BITTER HERBS: fresh horseradish cut into small pieces and placed at each table and on Seder plate.

CHAROSET: Walnuts*, cinnamon, honey or sugar, grape juice, 3 lb. Bag of Macintosh apples cut up into tiny pieces. All mixed together. Place a spoonful on each plate and Seder plate.

If children with nut allergies are present, charoset can be made without nuts

1 SEDER PLATE: (set up for the Seder leader on the center or head table) to contain....

1 SHANK BONE – ROASTED

1 UNPEELED HARD BOILED EGG – ROASTED

HORSERADISH

CHAROSET

PARSLEY / CELERY