

# Curriculum

## Aims and Objectives

These aims and objectives will succeed if there is active parental participation and cooperation at all levels in the religious school. Parents will be kept informed throughout the year, but are encouraged to reach out to the school if there are any school-related issues they wish to discuss.

1. To develop a positive Jewish identity and encourage Jewish learning as a lifelong process.
2. To foster a positive feeling towards Israel as the Jewish homeland.
3. To prepare our children to participate in the American Jewish community-ultimately for them to affiliate with a synagogue and Jewish organizations.
4. To enable our children to understand and develop a positive feeling toward events of the Jewish life cycle and home observances.
5. To hone the skills needed to practice Jewish traditions of Shabbat and holidays.
6. To create an understanding of the content of the prayers, with special emphasis on Shabbat services.
7. To encourage participation in the synagogue service.
8. To acquire a knowledge of Jewish history, from Biblical to modern times.
9. To promote a positive feeling for the Hebrew language by developing oral vocabulary skills, and achieving competency in reading and decoding.
10. To further the causes of justice, freedom and peace by pursuing *tzedek* (righteousness), *mishpat* (justice) and *chesed* (deeds of lovingkindness).
11. To express kinship with *Klal Yisrael* by actively seeking the welfare of Jews throughout the world.

## Gan- Kindergarten

**Gan meets once a week, Sundays from 8:45-10:45am**

What are the Jewish Holidays? What do they mean to us? How do we celebrate them? What is the cycle of the Jewish year like? These questions will frame the first encounters our youngest students have with their Jewish tradition. Gan students will begin their Jewish education with the foundational stories, symbols, rituals and blessings of the Jewish people, explored through musical and artistic expression, stories, hands-on activities and games.

*Hebrew:* The students will be introduced to basic vocabulary, including *Shabbat* and holiday related words. The students will learn to recognize the Hebrew letters.

*T'fillah:* The students will be introduced to the concepts of thanking G-d, including when and how we thank G-d. The students will learn basic *brachot* including *brachot* over food, and *Shabbat* and holiday related *brachot*.

*Tanach:* The students will be introduced to basic *Torah* stories, heroes in the *Torah* and the beginning of the Jewish people. They will explore the concepts of G-d as creator of the world, G-d and the Jewish people and how the *Torah* is a guide for our lives.

*Chagim:* The students will learn the basics of each Jewish holiday including *Shabbat*. They will learn the customs of how each holiday is celebrated in the home and in the synagogue.

*Mitzvot:* The students will explore various *mitzvot* including Tzedakah, honoring parents and *Tzar ba'alei Hayim*- being kind to animals

## **Kitah Alef-First Grade**

**Kitah Alef meets once a week, Sundays from 8:45-10:45am**

Kitah Alef will explore and develop their own individual connection to the Jewish experience: What are things that Jews do that make us different from other peoples and religions? How do Jews celebrate our holidays, rituals and traditions? Young people in Kitah Alef will continue to develop new skills, building on the experiences they encountered in Gan.

*Hebrew:* The students will learn *Shabbat* and holiday related vocabulary and begin attaining oral language skills. Students will continue work on letter recognition.

*T'fillah:* The students will begin to learn simple prayer terminology. They will focus on the following prayers, *Shema, Modeh Ani, Birchot Hanehenim* (daily blessings), *Shabbat brachot* and *Shehecheyanu*.

*Tanach:* The students will revisit the popular stories while engaging in activities that will help the students discover how our ancestors lived.

*Chagim:* The students will learn about each Jewish holiday and how it is celebrated. Through a Jewish Memory Book, the students will personalize each holiday celebration.

*Mitzvot:* The students will focus on the *mitzvot* of *Tzedakah and Tikkun Olam*. They will discuss ways we can be responsible for others and ways of doing *Tzedakah*, as well as how we can make the world a better place.

## **Kitah Bet- Second Grade**

**Kitah Bet meets once a week, Sundays from 8:45-10:45am**

The people, places and symbols of our Jewish heritage will be the focus of Kitah Bet students' studies as they start to answer these questions: What are the symbols and tools that we use to celebrate Jewish holidays and to live Jewish lives? What are some of the ways we act, behave and celebrate as Jews? How do different communities of Jews celebrate?

*Hebrew:* The students will continue to build their *Shabbat*, holiday and *Siddur* vocabulary including family, colors, body parts, weather, numbers, seasons, classroom. The students will begin working putting letters and vowels together, as well as building a sight vocabulary.

*T'fillah:* The students will continue to increase their *Shabbat* and Holiday vocabulary. The students will focus on the following prayers: *Shehecheyanu, Shalom Aleichem, Mah Nishtanah, Shema*, and the blessings for candle lighting.

*Tanach:* The students will delve more deeply into Bible stories and the heroes associated with them.

*Chagim:* The students will learn about all the Jewish holidays, including the home and communal rituals, as well as how Jews in other lands celebrate.

*Mitzvot*: The student will first focus on the *mitzvot* of *Ben Adam l'chavero* (how we treat each other). They will look at the biblical laws and examples and will discuss what they can do. They will discuss being a Mensch: respect for others; putting Mitzvot into action.

### **Kitah Gimmel 3<sup>RD</sup> GRADE**

**Kitah Gimmel meets Sunday 8:45am-12:00 noon and Wednesday 4:00pm-6:15pm**

Kitah Gimmel students will encounter the Jewish value of *G'milut Hasadim* on a variety of levels and in different forms throughout the year. The following questions will be posed for examination and discussion: What do Jews believe? What is important to us? What are Mitzvot? What does it mean to be commanded? Can you be commanded to be a Mensch?

*Hebrew*: Students will intensively review letters and vowels as they continue to improve their reading fluency, transition to *Siddur* reading and, towards the end of the year, receive their own *siddur*.

*T'fillah*: The focus throughout the year will be on various Shabbat and weekday prayers. Blessings for each holiday will be included. Kitah Gimmel students participate in the Wednesday school-wide *Mincha/Maariv* and the Sunday morning *Shacharit* services, where they are encouraged to lead prayers with their older counterparts.

*Tanach*: The students will look at the major characters, themes and events in the *Torah* from Creation to the Exodus. The students will ponder, personalize and wrestle with the text.

*Chagim*: The students will learn the Jewish calendar, including the names of the Hebrew months, the difference between lunar and solar, and where the Jewish holidays fall out in the calendar. They will explore the traditions associated with each holiday.

*Mitzvot*: The main focus of Kitah Gimmel is the Mitzvah of *G'milut Hasadim*, and how this Mitzvah helps shape them as Menschen. The students will re-look at *Tzedakah* focussing on *Rambam's* ladder, biblical examples and practical ways of doing *Tzedakah*.

*Israel*: An overview of the country through a "scavenger hunt".

### **Kitah Dalet 4<sup>th</sup> GRADE**

**Kitah Dalet meets Sunday 8:45am-12:00 noon and Wednesday 4:00pm-6:15pm**

Kitah Dalet students grapple with the stories of Heroes in Torah, and examine the difference between Torah and Bible. What do these ancient books mean to Jews today? What can we learn from the stories of the families in them? How can we personalize the prayers for deeper meaning?

*Hebrew*: Students will explore Hebrew through multi-media. Prayers will become personal through journaling, and decoding/reading practice is done as *Hevruta*. Students work through various textbooks and increase their *tefilot* fluency with a *Siddur* companion.

*T'fillah*: The students will focus on the Friday evening home rituals, *Shacharit* service, basic *Siddur* terms and an introduction to the *Amidah*. The students will review and learn the following prayers: Friday evening home rituals, *Shalom Aleichem*, *Sim Shalom*, *Ayn Kkaylokenu*, *Baruch She-Amar*, *Amidah* (first three *brachot*) and *Brachot Hatorah*. Kitah Gimmel students participate fully in the school-wide Wednesday and Sunday *t'filah* sessions.

*Tanach:* The students will learn about the *Nevi'im* (prophets) and *Ketuvim* (writings). They will look at the transition from a people to a nation beginning to understand prophets and prophecy, kings, kingdoms and their problems.

*Chagim:* The students will focus on the *Shalosh Regalim* (*Sukkot*, *Pesach*, and *Shavuot*). They will concentrate on the following areas: ties to Jewish history and agriculture, ties to *Eretz Yisrael*, basic observances, names of the holidays and terminology. They will also focus on *Shabbat* as they prepare for their Friday evening service. They will discuss *Shabbat* as a day of rest, and as remembrance of Creation and Exodus. The students will learn the customs and observances associated with *Shabbat*.

*Mitzvot:* The students will focus on the *Menschlichkeit* and *Kashrut*. The Jewish relationship to food will be explored and the idea that we must acknowledge where our food comes from and be sure that mitzvot and ethics guide our food choices.

## **Kitah Hey- 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE**

**Kitah Hey meets Sunday 8:45am-12:00 noon and Wednesday 4:00pm-6:15pm**

Kitah Hey students will spend their school year engaged in the study and practice of the Shabbat morning service. They will explore how prayer and prayers are integrated in the Jewish Life Cycle.

*T'fillah:* In addition to the prayers learned in their textbook, the students will focus on *Kriat Shema* and the *Shabbat morning service*. They will learn the following prayers, *Barechu*, *Ahava Rabah/Ahavat Olam*, parts of *Ashrei*, *Birchot HaTorah*, *Kaddish*, and *Aleynu*.

*Tanach:* The students will go beyond the Torah's five books to "Na" of "TaNaCh". Their studies will be enhanced with reenactments of stories from the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings as they ask the question: What is a Hero?

*Chagim:* The students will focus their studies on the minor holidays, *Chanukah*, *Tu B'Shevat*, *Purim* and the spring holidays. They will learn basic observances and explore historical dating and Jewish identity and identification.

*Mitzvot:* The students will explore the Jewish Life Cycle. They will understand the terminology, concepts and how to make it part of their lives. They will search through their own ancestry and build their family "constellation".

*Israel:* Through history, the students will take a "tour" of Israel. Along the way, they will learn Hebrew words, Jewish values, intriguing information and geography.

## **Kitah Vav- 6<sup>TH</sup> GRADE**

**Kitah Vav meets Sunday 8:45am-12:00 noon and Wednesday 4:00pm-6:15pm**

Kitah Vav students will explore the prayers and personalize their connection to them as they hone their skills in leading the Shabbat morning service. They encounter their own Biblical texts as they look towards their Bar/Bat mitzvah service. Students will grow to understand the responsibilities inherent in being an "adult" Jew as they decide on a personal Social Action project for the Mitzvah Fair.

*Hebrew:* The students will study some conversational Hebrew.

*T'fillah:* The students will focus on the *Amidah* and *Musaf* service. They will learn all the parts of the *Amidah*, High Holiday *Kiddush*, *Passover Kiddush* and key *brachot*, and will review *Bircat HaHaftarah* and *Bircat HaTorah*.

*Tanach:* The students will use the *Torah* text to study the Book of Exodus. They will be introduced to rabbinic commentary and the structure of the *Tanach*. They will ask the questions: How is Torah part of our lives? How can we make sure that the Torah's Mitzvot and values form the foundation of a rich tradition that they will want to continue? The students will have the opportunity to study with our Rabbinic Intern.

*Chagim:* Students will delve deeper into study of the holidays, and discover ways to personalize their celebration.

*History:* Through a textbook, the students will consider how their lives compare with the lives of those who came before them, how Judaism has evolved in every generation, and how the decisions of our forebears to adapt Judaism to their times and circumstances influence our own decisions today.

*Mitzvot:* The students will explore various Jewish values through their everyday relationships and be challenged to make decisions based on those values.

*Bnai Mitzvah:* Students will explore Jewish values through their everyday relationships and decision making.

## **Kitah Zayin- 7<sup>TH</sup> GRADE**

**Kitah Zayin meets Sunday 10:00am to 12:00 noon and Wednesday 4:00pm-6:15pm**

Young people in Kitah Zayin approach their studies as adults, grappling with contemporary issues connected to our understanding of Judaism, tradition, authority and personal obligation as they prepare to take on the responsibilities of a Jewish adult when they become *Bar/ Bat Mitzvah*. Each student will struggle with the questions that will shape their study throughout the year. They will continue to be challenged by the notion that *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* is NOT the end of studies, but the beginning of a new world of inquiry and self-led learning. They will approach their learning with the goal of connecting to the Jewish world at large; to become proud and responsible adult members of our Jewish community.

*Hebrew:* Students will continue to build their Hebrew vocabulary with the Israeli *Rishon* Working with Rabbi and Cantor, they will polish their skills as Torah readers and *Shlichei Tzibur* (service leaders).

*T'fillah:* The students will review all *tefilot* – specifically *Shabbat Shacharit* and *Musaf*. They will study the *tefillah* structure and the rhythm of various services.

*Chagim:* The students will explore interesting aspects of the holidays, and mentor younger students from time to time.

*Mitzvot/B'nai Mitzvah:* Now that you've got your license, are you going to drive? The pre-*B'nai Mitzvah* students will discuss issues relevant to the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*, and their place in the Jewish community. They will also mentor Kitah Vav students in creating a Mitzvah Project.

*History:* The students will study American Jewish history and the Holocaust. They will get a picture of life in Israel in the last century through the eyes of their teacher.