

Living A Jewish Life

Living a Jewish Life is our Sunday K-5th program designed to help our students understand their Jewish background and acquire the tools to, indeed, live a Jewish life. We meet twice a month, usually the first and third Sundays, for three afternoon hours of active and varied learning---and of course snack time!

Our program has a 6-year cycle of themes ensuring your child will never get tired of “the same old stuff”. Each year children will focus on a different part of Judaism that will allow them to more fully understand and appreciate their background. With this design, the school is unified in theme each year, yet teachers are able to specialize the content to meet the level of the students.

Our curriculum follows the following rotation:

Year 1	Three Moments of <i>Shabbat</i> : Erev Shabbat, Shabbat morning, and Havdallah The Creation chapters of <i>Genesis</i> and values and rituals of <i>Shabbat</i>
Year 2	Ancestor Tales and their Settings More stories from <i>Genesis</i> - Abraham and Sarah through Joseph, as well as geography of the Middle East and life in the patriarchal era
Year 3	The Three <i>Regalim</i> : <i>Pesach</i> , <i>Shavuot</i> and <i>Sukkot</i> Ancient and modern ways of celebrating the "Pilgrimage Festivals" and stories of Moses and the Israelites from the book of <i>Exodus</i>
Year 4	Israel in Temple times and Israel today Stories and customs of <i>Tisha be'Av</i> and <i>Chanuka</i> ; life in contemporary Israel, including Israeli ways of celebrating spring holidays such as <i>Purim</i> , <i>Lag ba'Omer</i> , <i>Yom haZikaron</i> , <i>Yom ha'Atzma'ut</i>
Year 5 (this year)	Jews Around the World: Different and the Same Folk tales, foods, celebrations, histories
Year 6	Fall and Spring festivities A more detailed look at autumn and spring Holy Days, their stories, values and customs

Each session begins with *Kehilla* (all-school assembly) where you are invited and encouraged to join your child (1:30pm-2:00pm). During this time we learn new songs, hear stories related to our curriculum, learn dances and come together as a community. We start every *Kehilla* by singing and dancing to *Hineh Ma Tov* as a way to gather us and bring us to a point of calmness to start our day of learning.

We end our day with another, shorter *Kehilla* (4:15pm – 4:30pm). At this *Kehilla* we may practice what we learned before classes, or participate in a brief child-friendly prayer service led by David Greenberg. Parents are encouraged to attend this *Kehilla* as well as

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the first. It's a great time to see what your child did during the day, learn prayers and songs with your child, and hear the announcements for the upcoming weeks.

This year's theme, *Jews Around the World: Different and the Same* will focus on the element of sameness will be three key Jewish values, as captured in the Talmudic words: "*Al shlosha dvarim...*" (On three things the world stands...) The three things are *torah*, *avoda*, and *gemilut hasadim*, which are loosely translated to mean learning, prayer and good deeds. The three will be woven throughout the year.

We will begin the year with an introduction to this set of concepts, encouraging students to broaden their idea of each. For example, the meaning of the word *torah* can range from the first five books of the *TaNakh* to the latest book by a famous rabbi to your own insight about how to live life well, and more. We will, however, from time to time approach Torah in the narrow sense, studying three key passages during the school year. Each age group will learn in ways their teacher thinks will work for them---writing midrash, hearing the story from a children's Bible, doing bibliodrama, making drawings, etc.

For prayer, we will open with short discussions about *avoda* in the broad sense, including spontaneous prayer, fixed blessings, doing what we conceive of as service to G-d. Here, too, there will be some attention to the narrow sense of *avoda* as all children learn the table blessings for Friday night and some key parts of the morning and evening prayer service (*barhu*, *shma*, *ve-'ahavta*). These learnings enable them to confidently participate in our wonderful Friday evening Dinners-with-the Rabbi, in our monthly end-of-day prayer services and in community services they attend with their parents and sometimes help lead.

Our all-school *Tikkun olam* (social action) program, started last year, will continue as a permanent part of our curriculum. This represents an example of the third strand of the three Talmudic values we are stressing this year.

Along with these recurring strands, our primary focus this year will be on the differing traditions of many Jewish groups---*Simhat Torah* in Russia; *Mimouna* in Jerusalem; *Purim* baking in Italy; a variety of *Pesah* traditions; songs, dances, folk tales from many places; what we mean by Ashkenazic, Sephardic, Mizrahic Jews; Reform, Orthodox, Hasidic, etc. As always, we will end our year with a very special event that will serve as a culmination of everything we have learned.

Beside topics and activities unique to this year, we have our usual "chef's specials." First, the very gradual introduction of the *alef-bet* for grades K-2, so our 3rd graders learning to read Hebrew by adding a Hebrew *Chavurah* will have a "leg-up." Second, your children will again have 3 opportunities to choose an art, craft, music, cooking or other elective.

We are confident your children will each find something in this rich and varied curriculum that will be a favorite memory in later years.