

# HEBREW CHAVUROT

Hebrew Chavurot is our 4-year (3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade) Hebrew and prayer program. In this program we focus on teaching children to read and write Hebrew and develop a love for this language used in ancient stories, spiritual prayers and modern life.

A *chavurah* is a small group with a shared interest, literally, "a fellowship group," and we created our program with that in mind. Each *chavurah* has approximately 6 students in it. Rather than meeting in a sterile classroom, classes are held at one or all of the students' homes. This design allows for personal attention from the teacher, less intimidating settings, and an environment where strong bonds can be created.

When setting up each of our Hebrew Chavurot, we factor in many things---your location, your day/hour preference, and if your child has any friends with whom your child likes to study. However, our most important factor is your child's Hebrew skill level. We cannot guarantee all of these criteria for every child, but we work hard to make the schedule fit everyone.

Once the groups have been formulated, your child's teacher will contact you and set up the first meeting time. From that point forward you will work foremost with your child's teacher to set the schedule for the year and resolve any scheduling conflicts that might arise. Because groups are so small, our teachers never have substitutes. If a teacher cannot make a class for any reason, he or she will contact the families to reschedule.

In Living a Jewish Life your child will learn Hebrew basics. We teach students to recognize a few letters and words, and learn by ear the blessings over the challah, candles and wine. In Hebrew Chavurot, we take Hebrew studies a giant step further, striving to bring students to reading fluency in a four-year comprehensive prayer curriculum. Children who start Hebrew Chavurot in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and continue through 6<sup>th</sup> grade will come out with a deep understanding of 18 – 20 prayers that they will be able to lead when it's time to become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah. All students enrolled in Hebrew Chavurot are required to have the CD "Shir Joy" which contains the melodies for many of the Saturday morning prayers. Please contact Sarah Pew if you need to purchase a copy. Participation in Hebrew Chavurot and the use of this CD will greatly reduce the amount of time (and money) spent with a tutor when preparing for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah service.

Along with learning to read prayers, we want our children to develop an understanding and love for modern Hebrew. Our teachers use games and songs to help teach topics such as days of the week, numbers and directions.

Hebrew Chavurot meet 21 times during the school year. 19 of these meetings are "traditional" classes with just the students and the teacher. Two of these classes, however, are special dinners or events. You and your teacher can plan a Shabbat or holiday dinner, or a fun outing, which includes the whole family but still requires the students to use Hebrew. At a Shabbat dinner students will practice saying all the blessings over the food, wine and candles and get a chance to learn phrases such as "Please pass the..." in Hebrew. Parent volunteers are always needed to help with special

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events such as these. If you are interested in volunteering please contact your child's teacher.

We want to give our students a chance to use what they've learned. Each *Chavurah* will have a Saturday morning during which they will help lead services. This might be with Nevei Kodesh, or might be in someone's home just for other students. Your child's teacher will provide you with information about this part of the program.

Your children will be issued a textbook for Hebrew Chavurot and will likely have homework between each meeting. This homework should not exceed more than 30 minutes, but it is imperative for your child's progress that he or she completes it.

Hebrew Chavurot works best when coupled with either Living a Jewish Life or Crossing the River and we strongly encourage you to enroll your child in one of those programs as well.

If you have any questions about this exciting and unique program, please feel free to contact Sarah Pew ([sarah@neveikodesh.org](mailto:sarah@neveikodesh.org)).