



EET Religious School – Year by Year

Pre-K/K

The focus for our students in their very first years of religious school is to get them acquainted with the basics. The theme for this year is, “I am Jewish.” These first years form the groundwork for your child’s Jewish identity and allowing their Jewish learning to feel seamless and integrated. Together we will discuss and explore what it means to be Jewish, engage in our heritage by learning basic Torah stories, celebrate the holidays, and honor mitzvot. We will begin to learn basic Hebrew vocabulary, prayers, and songs with our cantor, Shira Ginsburg.

1st Grade

In first grade, our students continue to build on the basics, expanding their understanding of “what being Jewish means to me.” They will continue to grow their understanding of basic Torah stories, the Jewish holidays and their respective rituals and traditions, and important mitzvot. Students will also engage in discussions about what God is and what God means to them. In their Hebrew studies, they will begin to learn the letters of the Hebrew aleph-bet, as well as continue learning Hebrew prayers and songs with our cantor, Shira Ginsburg. First grade is the continuation of forming the groundwork for your child’s Jewish identity, allowing it to develop in an integrated and holistic way.

2nd Grade

The lens for second grade is *Kehillah*, or community. The concept of *kehillah* becomes the lens through which all subjects are examined. Students study Torah stories from Genesis more in depth, focusing on the lessons and Jewish values that can be learned from those stories. Students will then personalize those lessons and create a class *Kehillah* Torah.

Students will learn more about the stories behind each holiday, and the connection between the ancient story and the way we celebrate the holiday today in our own *kehillah*. Students will explore the question: How is God a part of our *kehillah*? They will also learn about the principle of *g’milut chasidim*, or acts of loving kindness within the context of *kehillah* – What are some specific things we can do to make our *kehillah* kinder and more caring? In learning about Israel, we will learn about different types of *kehlilot* that exist in Israel from a small kibbutz, to bustling large cities, to the different quarters of Jerusalem.

In their Hebrew studies, students will learn to read and write Hebrew words using the PHD (Phonetic Hebrew Decoding) workbooks, as well as continue to use modern Hebrew vocabulary in class. Students will have the opportunity to apply their Hebrew skills in the weekly *t’filah*, or prayer service, led by Cantor Shira Ginsburg and Rabbi Joshua Stanton.

3rd Grade

Third grade’s focus is *Mishpachah*, or family. Students will study Torah stories, exploring them from the lens of family relationships. This unit will culminate in the creation of a Torah Family Tree. With the focus of *mishpachah*, students will learn about celebrating the Jewish holidays at home, sharing how each family celebrates, and special ritual objects families may have. Students will explore the concept of God as a member of one’s family, and the role God has in family life.

Mitzvot that students learn this year relate to family life, with a focus on *g’milut chasidim*, or acts of loving kindness. Example of *g’milut chasidim* include *bikur cholim* (visiting the sick) or *tza’ar ba’alei chaim* (caring for animals). Students learn about Israel through the lens of Israel as a homeland for the Jewish people, from ancient history to modern day. We will also continue learning to read and write Hebrew using the PHD (Phonetic Hebrew Decoding) books. We will also start to apply our Hebrew in learning to read blessings and prayers. Students will have the opportunity to apply their Hebrew skills in the weekly *t’filah*, or prayer service, led by Cantor Shira Ginsburg and Rabbi Joshua Stanton.

4th Grade

In fourth grade, students will experience the cycle of the Jewish *Shanah*, or year. When studying the Torah, it will be examined through the concept of the weekly *parashah*, as students learn how the Torah is broken into portions, read in the cycle of the Jewish *shanah*, bookended by Simchat Torah and Shemini Atzeret. Students will also learn about the holidays in the context of the cycle of the Jewish calendar, taking time to learn the Jewish months. In keeping with the theme of cycles, the Jewish life cycle will be examined, covering such important milestones as birth, *b'rit milah*, bar and bat mitzvah, marriage, and death.

In studying about Israel, students will virtually be “cycling” through the country, experiencing the sights, smells, tastes, and sounds. We will continue learning to read and write Hebrew using the PHD (Phonetic Hebrew Decoding) books and start to apply our Hebrew in learning to read blessings and prayers. Students will have the opportunity to apply their Hebrew skills in the weekly *t'filah*, or prayer service, led by Cantor Shira Ginsburg and Rabbi Joshua Stanton.

5th Grade

The underlying concept of fifth grade is: “I am made in the image of God,” or *B'tzelem Elohim*. Study of the *Tanach* will be introduced (Torah, Nevi'im [Prophets], K'tuvim [Writings]), expanding students' understanding of Jewish texts beyond Torah. We will focus on a selection of stories from Nevi'im, the Prophets, exploring the idea of a prophet in relation to the concept of *B'tzelem Elohim*.

Delving deeper into the idea of *B'tzelem Elohim*, students will explore what this means to them personally, and how it affects the way they live their life specifically; the focus will be on connecting this to an exploration of Jewish Virtues and Social Justice.

Students will learn about Israel as a force for justice and innovation in the world, and Israel as a safe haven for Jews who have been persecuted for their religion. This will also be the first year in which we will begin to address the Holocaust in the time surrounding Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day).

Each student continues to work on Hebrew reading skills at his or her own pace—either continuing with the PHD books, or with reading Hebrew prayers and blessings. Students will have the opportunity to apply their Hebrew skills in the weekly *t'filah*, or prayer service, led by Cantor Shira Ginsburg and Rabbi Joshua Stanton.

6th Grade

In sixth grade, students focus on the idea: “I put Jewish values into action in my community,” keeping in mind the Jewish value of *Tikkun Olam*, or repairing the world. Students will continue their exploration of the *Tanach* (Torah, Nevi'im, K'tuvim), specifically studying selections from K'tuvim (Writings) including Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Book of Ruth.

Already having a strong understanding of the holidays in place, students will now study the holidays as an opportunity to put *Tikkun Olam* into action. Students will determine each holiday's opportunity for connection to “repairing the world.”

In their discussion of God, students will again focus on *Tikkun Olam*, asking the question: “What role does God play in repairing the world, and how is God our partner in this endeavor?” An important goal overall for this year is to have students start putting the ideas of *Tikkun Olam* into practice by engaging in meaningful social action in our community.

This year, students will study American Jewish history, including the connection between the American Jewish community and Israel, and the Holocaust in relation to American Jewish history.

In their Hebrew studies, students continue to work on Hebrew reading skills at their own pace— learning to read Hebrew prayers and blessings. Students will have the opportunity to apply their Hebrew skills in the weekly *t'filah*, or prayer service, led by Cantor Shira Ginsburg and Rabbi Joshua Stanton.

7th Grade

The central theme of seventh grade, not surprisingly, is the *Bar and Bat Mitzvah*—specifically, what it means to be a bar or a bat mitzvah in the world. Students will engage in text analysis of weekly Torah portions in the style of preparing for a *d'var Torah* for students' bar/bat mitzvah.

During the seventh-grade year, students will study more in depth about the Holocaust. Students will learn about the Holocaust in chronological order and will learn key vocabulary. Students will also study the implications the Holocaust has had for the Jewish people, specifically in relation to the creation of the state of Israel, as well as Israel today and modern anti-Semitism. *In their bar and bat mitzvah year, students will also work individually with Rabbi Joshua Stanton and Cantor Shira Ginsburg to prepare.*