



## EET Religious School – Year by Year

### **Pre-K/K -- Traditions and Mitzvot**

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, using Hebrew Through Movement. We will learn songs and prayers with our cantor, Shira Ginsburg.

### **1st Grade -- Family in Torah**

In first grade, our students continue to build on the basics, and learn about “Family in Torah”. Students will connect Jewish identity with Family values through the lens of Torah. We will learn about the different people in the Torah and their stories. Students will then personalize those lessons and create a class Torah. In their Hebrew studies, they will continue Hebrew Through Movement and begin to learn the letters of the Hebrew aleph-bet, as well as continue learning Hebrew prayers and songs with our cantor, Shira Ginsburg.

### **2nd Grade -- Undiscovered Torah**

In second grade, our students will continue to build their connection to Torah and focusing on the lesser-known Torah stories. 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. Students will explore the questions: How was the Torah written and why is it written the way it is?

In their Hebrew studies, students will continue Hebrew Through Movement and learning our Hebrew aleph-bet and numbers. 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 -- Jewish Life Cycle**

Third grade will focus on Jewish traditions and Jewish Life Cycle events. Student will learn about celebrating the Jewish holidays at home, sharing how each family celebrates, and special ritual objects families may have. Students will chart their own life events and put them in line with the Jewish Life Cycle Events they will learn. Students will answer the question: Why do we celebrate the holidays the same way every year?

The *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. Students will learn 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 -- Discovering the Siddur/Jews Around the World**

In the fourth grade students will personalize their own Jewish experience through the lens of prayer. Students will answer the questions: Why do we pray and how do we pray? Students will gain the understanding and materials to make their own Siddur. Students will be able to synthesize the prayers and the traditions they have learned.

We will also explore Jews in different countries around the world. Students will learn how Jews celebrate holidays in the different countries, what foods they eat. Students will compare this knowledge to how Jews live in the United States and Israel.

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 -- Prophets/Modern Prophets**

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 -- Ketuvim/American Jewish History**

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 also 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 -- Community Organizing/Holocaust**

The central theme of seventh grade, 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. Students will learn about Community Organizing in preparation for their Mitzvah project.

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.*