

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL CURRICULUM – SPECIAL DATES

Temple Israel is known throughout the community for our progressive Religious School curriculum which has been designed to engage children in their Jewish learning throughout all grade levels.

Below are grade level summaries of the concepts, values, prayers and texts around which the Temple Israel Religious School curricula are built. Building community is at the foundation; all classes incorporate the study of Israel, Tikkun Olam (taking care of the world) as well as B'tzelem Elohim (in the image of G-d) into their lessons.

Included in each summary are the topics and dates of the Family Education programs held once a year for each grade level. Parents are urged to attend these special events which contain a special activity with their child, as well as a study component. A Friday evening, holiday or special worship service is part of the curriculum for every grade.

In the lower grades, Hebrew is informally integrated into the curriculum in preparation for the beginning of formal Hebrew school education in third grade. Music and art enrichment, taught by trained specialists, round out curriculum in each grade.



Pre-Kindergarten

Once per month, as part of Shabbat School on Saturday mornings, parents, grandparents and students come together to study and celebrate our holidays. Each session contains a learning portion as well as a variety of hands-on projects including baking (challah to toffee matzah), art (painting birdhouses to creating “tzedakah to go” boxes), story-time, and community building opportunities for families. Through these fun activities, families experience the cycle of the year. Participants in this highly interactive, fun-filled class are also integrated into the full school experience via participation in Religious School services, and music class. The text used in Pre-Kindergarten is Jewish and Me: Holidays.

✚ **Pre-K dates for 2011-12 are: September 17, October 15, November 19, December 10, January 21, March 3, March 24, April 21 and May 12.**



Kindergarten

During Kindergarten, students explore the Jewish holidays and general Judaica, with a focus on rituals, the cycle of the year, and an introduction to the 10 Commandments. Students participate regularly in intra-grade activities to build community, relationships and comfort at Temple Israel. The Kindergarten Values Curriculum focuses on Tzedakah (righteousness), Tza'ar Ba'alei Chayim (kindness to animals), Bal Tash'hit (keeping the earth) and Bikkur Cholim (visiting the sick). An extended study of tzedakah and mitzvot (acts of human kindness or commandments) emphasizes community and hands-on mitzvah activities. During their study of creation, each student designs and completes a creation book which they share with the entire student body during services in the spring. Students participate in the Color Project as part of our Diversity Within Judaism Program, which reinforces the idea that people cannot be placed in such simple categories black or white, and that appearances should not be the only way to describe a person. As part of our Disability Awareness Training, Kindergarten students explore hearing impairments, learn the Shema in sign language and then teach it to the student body during a Religious School service. The text used in Kindergarten is A Time to Celebrate; as part of their prayer curriculum, students study the Shema.

✚ **Consecration, which marks the beginning of each child's formal Jewish studies at Temple Israel, will be held on Sunday, October 16, 2011; information will be mailed to families.**

✚ **Family Education for Kindergarten students and parents, held on December 10/11, 2011 will focus on the holiday of Chanukah.**



First Grade

In First Grade, the central focus is Shabbat. During the course of the year, each class studies all aspects of Shabbat culminating in the creation of a Shabbat kit by each student. Each kit contains all ritual items needed for the celebration of Shabbat, including Havdalah. In April, the students and their families come together for a special Friday evening Shabbat dinner during which the children use the items they created. Other holidays are studied throughout the year, exploring their unique ritual objects and blessings. The study of Israel is fully integrated throughout the first grade year. First Grade values curriculum encompasses Derekh Eretz (respect), Mitzvot (commandments), Mechabayd Zehet Zeh (loving and honoring one another), Shabbat (Sabbath), Shalom (peace) and Shalom Bayit (peace in the home). As part of our Disability Awareness program, students explore visual impairment via a variety of experiences including reading prayers in Braille. Prayer curriculum for first grade includes the Barchu (Call to Worship) and Kedushat Hayom (Sanctification of the Day). Jewish literature and texts are used to reinforce concepts taught in class.

- ✚ **Family Education for First Grade students and parents is the Family Shabbat Dinner and service on April 27, 2012.**



Second Grade

The Second Grade curriculum explores the cycle of the weekly Torah readings and the role of the synagogue in our lives. Through use of the text, My Weekly Sidra, Chai (Torah strand) as well as games, projects and stories, students understand the meaning and lessons learned from each Torah portion; students also gain familiarity with the synagogue as a place and its meaning. Bible stories are used to reinforce the course material. In second grade, the synagogue and the Bible curricula present the lens for holiday study. Second grade values curriculum focuses on Bikkur Cholim (visiting the sick), Emet (truthfulness), Kavod (honor), and Sever Panim Yafot (a pleasant demeanor). The Chai Avodah (spiritual work our minds and hearts engage in to connect with G-d) component includes Mah Tov (How Pleasant are Your Dwellings), Mi Chamocha (Who is Like You?), blessings, Modeh Ani (Giving Thanks) and Shema.

- ✚ **Second and Third Graders will lead the congregation in song during the Family Chanukah Service and Dinner on Friday, December 23, 2011.**
- ✚ **The Family Education program for Second Grade is Alef Round-up on Sunday, February 12, 2012 (all 2nd grade students attend on Sunday).**



Third Grade

Third Grade students study the concept that “the world stands on three things: Torah, Avodah and Gemilut Hasadim”. These pursuits – study, worship and deeds of loving kindness – provide the framework in which Jews build their relationships with G-d, with one another and with the world. The text used is the Chai Curriculum. Life cycle is explored through Building Jewish Life: Life Cycle. In third grade, holidays are studied from the perspective of life cycle and caring for our environment. Students delve into Shehecheyanu, Yotzer (Creation), and Nissim B’chol Yom (Blessings for Daily Miracles). The values curriculum for third grade includes Brit (covenant), Gemilut Hasadim (acts of loving kindness), Teva (protecting the environment), Lashon Ha-Ra (gossip) and Kedushah (holiness).

- ✚ **The Third Grade Family Education Program, the “Great G-d Hunt”, will take place on November 12/13, 2011.**
- ✚ **Second and Third Graders will lead the congregation in song during the Family Chanukah Service and Dinner on Friday, December 23, 2011.**



Fourth Grade

The curriculum emphasis in Fourth Grade is the analysis of Jewish text. Through the texts Being Torah, Experiencing the Torah, and A Child's Bible: Lessons from the Prophets and Writings, students become familiar with our Bible and come to understand how the words of the Torah impact our lives and guide our decisions. Students also explore the Tanach, Talmud, and Midrash. Holidays are studied via the connection to Jewish text and literature. All sources help guide students to translate words and thought into action. The Chai Avodah (spiritual work our minds and hearts engage in to connect with G-d) component consists of the V'ahavata (Love of G-d), Kiddush, and creating silent prayers. The values curriculum for fourth grade covers Rodef Shalom (seeking peace), Talmud Torah (studying Torah), Vikuach (arguments), and V'ahavta L're'acha Kamocha (love one's neighbor).

- ✚ The Fourth Grade Family Education program on January 7/8, 2012 is an introduction to Talmud study.**
- ✚ Fourth graders will take an active role in leading the Purim Service/Megillah reading on March 7, 2012.**
- ✚ Watch for information about our 4.5.6 kickoff program with our fabulous new youth director, Andrea Gordon. We can't wait for you to meet her!**



Fifth and Sixth Grade



Fifth and Sixth Grade uses a sequential curriculum, the focus of which is Jewish Peoplehood, History and the Holocaust.

Fifth Grade students cover a wide span of ancient history over the course of the year, starting with the Matriarchs and Patriarchs through the Crusades. Students participate in a study of personal family history through our Diversity Program, coming to understand the diversity within our Jewish community. Holidays are studied through the lens of ancient history and Israel. Students are exposed to a variety of resources and texts including History of the Jewish People, Volume 1, and Understanding Jewish History, I and the multi-media Heritage: Civilization and the Jews. The Chai Avodah (spiritual work our minds and hearts engage in to connect with G-d) component consists of the Amidah, Aleinu and Kaddish. Values curriculum topics include Brit (covenant), Hachnasat Orchim (welcoming the stranger/hospitality), Nedivut (generosity), and Yisrael (Israel).

- ✚ Fifth graders will take a leading role in the congregational Simhat Torah Dinner and Service on Wednesday, October 19, 2011.**
- ✚ The Family Education program, focusing on social action and doing for others, for Fifth Grade will take place on November 6, 2011 (all 5th grade students attend on Sunday).**
- ✚ Watch for information about our 4.5.6 kickoff program with our fabulous new youth director, Andrea Gordon. We can't wait for you to meet her!**

Through a lens of our Jewish identities, Sixth Grade students focus on a wide range of historical figures and events, holidays and values that helped shape who we are as Jews today. Students begin with the Golden Age of Spain and travel through the centuries to the events of the mid-twentieth century, such as the Holocaust and the formation of Israel, which made significant changes in the landscape of Jewish history. A variety of learning techniques such as art, reading, discussion and skits, are combined to ensure that each child finds his/her own link to our past as well as how they can help move us forward into the future. Guest speakers, personal stories and testimonials are part of the curriculum, particularly during the study of the Shoah. Holidays are studied through an historical lens, for example, how was a Sedar celebrated during the Civil War or a Purim Shpiel performed in the ghettos of Europe. Information is culled from a variety of sources, including but not limited to History of the Jewish People, Volume 2, Understanding Jewish History, II, Atlas of Great Jewish Communities, the Challenge and Change series and Journey Through Jewish History. Values are tied to different people and events throughout the year with a specific focus on the following: Anavah (humility), Zachor (remembrance), Pikuach Nefesh (saving a life), Sameach B'chelko (contentment with your lot), and Heshbon Ha-Nefesh

(accounting of the soul) as they pertain to the history, historical figures, values and holidays that students study.

- ✚ Family Education for Sixth Grade, taking place on April 15, 2012 will focus on Yom Hashoah: Holocaust Remembrance Day.**
- ✚ To honor completion of each student's elementary education, sixth graders will be acknowledged during our Sixth Grade Recognition and Hebrew School Dalet Graduation Service and dinner on May 18, 2012.**
- ✚ Watch for information about our 4.5.6 kickoff program with our fabulous new youth director, Andrea Gordon. We can't wait for you to meet her!**



Temple Israel Religious School is a beneficiary of the Minneapolis Jewish Federation.