

JEM Hebrew School Curriculum

Our philosophy is that it is most important for children to have a positive first experience in Hebrew School. We therefore go to great lengths to create a warm and exciting atmosphere in the classroom incorporating, art projects, songs, games and contests into all of our lesson plans. With this in mind we have nonetheless planned a full and thorough curriculum including the following subjects.

1. Hebrew Reading & Writing
2. Jewish Tradition
3. History of the Jewish People
4. Jewish Holidays.

Hebrew Reading

Students will begin by being introduced to the letters of the Aleph Bet. They will spend a great deal of time on letter recognition through exercises, and games to insure that their foundation in Hebrew reading is solid. The class will be finished with the entire Aleph Bet by Winter Vacation in December. After the vacation they will begin learning the Nikudot (Vowels). They will focus on recognizing the names, appearance and sounds of the Nikudot until the Passover Vacation. From Passover until the end of the year they will begin doing reading exercises with 2 and 3 letter words.

Children will be given about 5 minutes of Hebrew reading homework/review on most nights. It is most important that they actually do the assignment in order for them to properly progress in their reading. To insure that you are kept well informed as to what your child is learning in the classroom you will frequently be asked to sign work assignments and tests and return them with your child to the classroom.

Finally, it is most important that you realize that this is a "beginners" class. Don't expect your child to be reading fluently after a few months of Hebrew School. Indeed if your child has a good attendance record and does the homework responsibly, he/she will only be able to *slowly* piece together small words. As they continue in our more advanced Hebrew classes, we will teach them to strengthen their reading and teach them handwriting as well. We will also begin teaching Hebrew as a Language in the more advanced classes.

Jewish Tradition

In order for children to be able to develop a sense of pride for their Jewish heritage they need to begin learning about their traditions. It is our goal to introduce to them as many traditions and concepts as possible, but to do so in a manner that allows them to see the beauty and meaning of Jewish Tradition. Throughout the year your children will learn about the following Jewish concepts: "Honoring your parents", charity, kindness to your fellow, mezuzah, kosher, Shabbat, The Jewish dress code - kippa, tzitzit etc. and the Jewish Calendar. These subjects are replaced with Holiday subjects as Jewish holidays approach so that we can properly prepare the students for each upcoming holiday.

History of the Jewish People

Throughout the year your children will be learning Jewish History to give them a sense of Jewish pride and identity. History will be taught primarily on Sundays. Your children can expect to cover from the creation of the world until the Jewish Exodus from Egypt. History will be taught in a story form as well through games projects, dramatizations and contests.

Jewish Holidays

As each holiday of the Jewish calendar approaches, we will spend a great deal of time learning about the history, customs and traditions of the holiday. This will help bring meaning to the many beautiful, yet often strange rituals of our heritage. Expect your children to learn in depth about the following holidays; Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Simchat Torah, Chanuka, Tu B'Shvat, Purim, Pesach, Lag B'omer, and Shavuot.

Our holiday curriculum is also spiced up with games, projects, songs, performances and projects. Quite often as we approach the last few days before a major holiday other subjects such as History or Hebrew are pre-empted to allow ample time to properly teach about the holidays.

We encourage you to ask your children to share with you the many things they are learning about each holiday. This will help re-enforce what they are learning in the class room and may well add meaning to your family holiday celebration. We also encourage you to join our community holiday celebrations and services; they are all offered at no cost and require no membership.