

## **TORAH SCHOOL EDUCATION CURRICULUM SUMMARY**

### **Goals**

Our goal is for Torah School to become a place where students want to go. By creating positive feelings towards Torah School, students are more likely to continue learning about Judaism throughout their life. We achieve this aim by balancing traditional methods of learning with more experiential forms of education. As well as learning in the classroom, students experience Jewish values, traditions, histories, and cultures through a series of practical activities, both inside and outside the synagogue. By approaching education in this manner, students can learn about Judaism in ways that are fun, engaging, interactive, and meaningful, and which provide relevance for their lives. Our Torah School encourages students to make ethical decisions, to be proud of being Jewish, and to think of Judaism as source of strength, comfort, and guidance. Through our weekly classes, holiday celebrations, and family education days, we build in opportunities for students and families to create community and to develop long-lasting friendships.

### **Objectives**

- By the end of Torah School, students are able to identify and explain Jewish values and apply them to their lives.
- Students will have learned Hebrew prayers and will be able to recite them, understand their meaning, and situate their place within a service
- Students will be able to make connections between the Bible and their own lives, by studying key Bible stories and characters.
- Students will have begun to construct their own Jewish identity through engagement with text, tradition, history, and culture.

### **Family Education Days**

As well as learning on an individual grade level, the Torah School runs a number of community learning and family education days. Over the past two years we have harvested fruits and vegetables at a local farm for Sukkot, learned about the Noah's Ark story by exploring Santa Barbara Zoo, explored the connection between Judaism and the environment at Camp JCA Shalom, planted fruits, vegetables, flowers, and trees at Temple Beth Torah to celebrate Tu B'Shvat, and learned about tikkun olam while making welcome bags for Casa Pacifica, a Camarillo home for children who are unable to live at home. These days have been a highlight of our calendar over the past few years and we are looking forward to many more over the next year.

## **Sunday Morning Torah School Classes**

### **Pre-Kindergarten**

#### **Educational Goals of Mishpacha/Shorashim (Family/Roots) program are:**

To begin families on a journey of Jewish learning together.

To introduce students to idea of Jewish learning and living through art, music, dance, games etc.

To create a sacred community of families with young children.

To introduce families to Jewish holiday practices they can do in their homes.

### **K-1st Grade**

#### **Educational Goals for Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade:**

To introduce students to Jewish values focusing on: *Tzedakkah* (Charity), *Ahavah* (Love), *Shalom* (Peace).

To introduce the themes and practices of Jewish holidays such as *Shabbat*, *Hanukkah* and *Purim*.

To introduce Torah stories such as Creation and Noah's Ark.

To begin to introduce Hebrew letters and Hebrew phrases.

To begin to create positive Jewish experiences of formal learning at Torah School.

## **2nd Grade**

### **Educational Goals of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade:**

To build on the learning the previous year to continue to introduce students to Jewish values such as: *Ahavah*, *Chaverim* (friendship) and *Shalom Bayit* (Peace in the Home).

To build on the Hebrew letters and phrases learned in K-1 grade.

To build on the learning about ideology and practices of Jewish holidays in the previous year focusing on *Simchat Torah*, *Tu Bishvat* and *Shabbat*.

To introduce students to deeper Torah study, focusing the book of Genesis.

To continue to create positive learning experiences for students to help them create positive Jewish memories.

## **Wednesday Afternoon and Sunday Morning Classes**

### **3rd-4th Grade**

#### **Educational Goals of 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> grade:**

To begin a more academic study of Hebrew including recitation and understanding of the prayer such as the *Shema*, *Baruchu*, *Mi Chamochah*.

To enable students to begin to incorporate Jewish values into their daily lives, such as *Tzedakah* and being a *Mesneh* (good person).

To review and discuss Torah Stories such as the Exodus from Egypt and other narratives in the book of Exodus in ways relevant and meaningful to students.

To explore Jewish concepts of God and theology.

To discuss the meanings behind the Jewish holidays of *Tu Bishvat* and *Passover*.

### **5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Grade**

#### **Educational Goals of 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade:**

To enhance the academic learning of Hebrew focusing on the recitation and understanding of central prayers such as the *Amidah*, *Aleinu*, *Kaddish*.

To introduce students to the importance of Jewish lifecycle events.

To teach students about Jewish history, through an exploration of the prophets.

To explore methods for students to utilize Jewish values when making decisions in their everyday lives.

To focus on the concepts and practices of the High Holy Days and *Shavout*.

## **Wednesday Evening Classes**

For the middle and high school students, the first half of the year the students are engaged in the core curriculum with the educational goals listed below. For the second half of year, the students participate in electives, mini-courses, guest speakers and holiday celebrations. These classes are re-designed each year to reflect the interests of the students.

### **7<sup>th</sup> Grade**

#### **Educational Goals of 7<sup>th</sup> grade:**

To teach students to read and interpret Torah, focusing on their own understanding of the text.

To provide students with methods for experiencing and understanding the flow of the Shabbat morning services.

To prepare students for their *bar* and *bat mitzvah* (note some of these sessions include parent participation).

To offer students opportunities to create their own ritual items as they learn about the Jewish concept of *Hitor Mitzvah*.

To introduce new theological ideas such as different views and conceptions of God, the reason for human suffering, and God's role in our world today.

To revisit concepts learned in previous years at Torah School such as *Shabbat* and *Ahavah*.

To enable students to be able to recite and understand the Torah Service in Hebrew.

### **8<sup>th</sup> Grade**

#### **Educational Goals for 8<sup>th</sup> grade:**

To encourage students to deepen their understanding of Judaism and other religions.

To provide students with the tools to discuss theological and ideological concepts in Judaism with other Jews and with non-Jews.

To enable students to ask questions about Judaism and to understand similarities and differences between Judaism and other religions.

## **9<sup>th</sup> Grade**

### **Educational Goals of 9<sup>th</sup> grade:**

We are in the process of redesigning the 9<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum. In past year 9<sup>th</sup> grade students have focused on building healthy relationships, developing positive self-esteem and making good choices through the URJ's "sacred choices" curriculum.

To encourage students to make positive choices based on Jewish values.

To promote positive self esteem, body image and healthy relationships

To create a safe space where students can openly share with each other