



Congregation Beth Yam Religious School



Overview of Curriculum by Grade

Our curriculum is based on the goals of Congregation Beth Yam. As a Reform Religious School we are firmly rooted in Jewish tradition. We are committed to guiding students on a lifelong journey to explore their Jewish identities and find meaningful ways to bring Judaism into contemporary life. We have a spiraling curriculum allowing multiple topics to “spiral” through the grades, growing in complexity as the students mature.

Grades K-3

Students in Kita Gan (*pre-school*), Alef (*K-1*), and Bet (*2-3*) begin to develop skills and awareness of the holiday cycle, synagogue ritual, Jewish values and ethics, Torah study, and begin a program of basic Hebrew reading skills.

Grades 4-5

Students in the Gimel class develop functional Hebrew reading skills, become conversant with the order of the worship service and the meaning of prayers, study lifecycle events, explore our Jewish history, celebrate holidays, learn about the land of Israel and its culture, read selections of the Bible, and grapple with ethical dilemmas in a Jewish context. Students explore this in an integrated Hebrew and Judaica Studies Curriculum, taught both in Sunday and Thursday sessions of Religious School.

Grades 6-8

Middle School students focus on their identity and confidence and what it means to be a Jew in the world in which we live. This class is age-appropriately designed specifically to encourage, maintain, and apply the skills previously acquired. Together as a learning community of adolescents, they will explore the challenges that Jews have faced throughout history and today, and the coping skills applied by our heroes, as well as among each other. This class includes more in-depth stories, translated liturgy, introspection and discussion. Knowledge of Hebrew, though an advantage, is not necessary for participation in this class.

Hebrew skills will continue to be developed for middle school students in Thursday and Geshher classes. Continued attendance in Thursday Hebrew School is expected for middle school students until they become a B’nai Mitzvah.

Students in Geshher (*pre-B’nai Mitzvah*) will be given their individual Haftarah and Torah portions and will hone their skills in reading blessings and prayers. The focus will be to develop greater understanding of the responsibility and the meaning of becoming a B’nai Mitzvah. This class is designed to prepare students for studying with their assigned tutors.

Grades 9-12

Students in High School, as young adults, will start building a deeper connection with the Rabbi, and with Judaism as they continue to develop their Jewish identity. We will engage our students by using different topics and a variety of methods such as discussions, and debates about Jewish identity, Jewish thought and Jewish values.