

Ohavi Zedek Synagogue Hebrew School
Curriculum Overview 2014-2015 5775

Revised July 2014

The Jewish population of Vermont is somewhere between 5000 and 6000 Jews. Some of our children can find themselves at public school being the only Jew in their class, grade or even school. Here at OZHS, we give them an opportunity to connect to their history, heritage and customs and to their fellow Jewish classmates.

We strive to create a sense of welcoming and community for our families. Our doors are always open to both child and parent alike. We also look to make connections for our students between what they learn here and the greater world. It is so very important that what we teach is relevant to the lives of our students, growing up as Jews in Vermont in the 21st century. Each month, we delve into different themes and come together to celebrate our learning at an all school event. This way, kids get an opportunity to explore ideas that relate to the rich cycle of traditions our Jewish calendar offers us.

Ohavi Zedek means 'Lovers of Justice'. We take this name to heart in our teachings here. Many of our monthly events encompass the concepts of tzedakah and Gimilut Hasadim and stress the idea that as Jews we can reach out to the greater community around us and help.

At the end of their tenure here, we want our students to graduate with a kitbag filled with tools to continue their own exploration of Judaism. They should leave here with an understanding of holidays, history, Tanach, tefila, kashrut, Israel, Hebrew, mitzvot, life cycle events and ethics. May they learn it with joy and love.

CURRICULUM GOALS FOR GAN/KINDERGARTEN CLASS

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

Kitah Gan aims to provide a fun, comfortable and welcoming experience which helps students to become more connected with their Jewish identity and heritage. In keeping with the notion that young children thrive on consistency, sessions are structured so that schedule/routine each session remains relatively constant, while specific themes for that day's discussions, activities, projects, etc. vary during the

course of the year. Connections are threaded among the weekly Torah portions, holidays, or community events and the experiences the students are likely to have had in their own lives.

Gan students are presented with a miniature Torah and formally "consecrated" to Jewish study at Simchat Torah children's services in the fall. (Consecration date for 2014: Thursday evening 10/16/14)

TEFILA GOALS:

- Participation in Family Friendly Shabbat Services when Hebrew School meets on Shabbat (2014/15: 10/25, 1/17, 2/13, 3/21).
- Participation in Junior Congregation. Learning the first line of the Shema and leading it during Junior Congregation.
- Shabbat table blessings (candles, bread, wine/grape juice [up to borey pri hagafen]).
- Food blessings.
- First line of the "Four Questions" ("Ma nishtanah...").

TORAH GOALS:

- Families present weekly Torah portion highlights through an age appropriate story, skit, pictures, etc. during "Torah Time".
- Each session includes storytelling time, sometimes in conjunction with visits to the Ohavi Zedek library.

HOLIDAYS, CUSTOMS AND CONCEPTS

- Students learn about Jewish holidays through stories, observances, customs and appropriate blessings and prayers.
- Arts and craft projects related to Jewish concepts. Activities and projects in recent years have included:
 - Making Tzedaka boxes
 - Making a story board of the days of creation
 - Jewish Bingo
 - Drawing pictures to describe and illustrate their definition of God and what God means to them
 - Making mezuzot
 - Drawing life size murals of their Jewish self

- Arts and craft projects related to specific holidays. Activities and projects in recent years have included:
 - Making Sukkah decorations.
 - Taking up the lulav and etrog in the Sukkah on Sukkot
 - Making Chanukiyot (menorahs)
 - Making and playing with dreidels (sevivonim)
 - Planting seeds on Tu B'Shevat
 - Making Groggers (ra'ashanim) for Purim
 - Making Seder plates for Passover (Pesach)
 - Making Haggadot for Passover
 - Participating in an in-class model Passover seder

MODERN HEBREW GOALS:

- To understand that there is a distinction between Hebrew letters and English letters.
- To begin to learn the letters of the Hebrew alphabet and the sounds they make through games, music and crafts.
- To introduce Hebrew vocabulary through playing games.
- Count to 10.
- Recite the Aleph-Bet song.

CURRICULUM GOALS FOR KITAH ALEPH/ GRADE 1

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The goal of Kitah Aleph (grade 1) is to continue to build a foundation for Jewish education and to provide a rich variety of experiences in Jewish observance and in the joy of Shabbat and holidays, through hands-on experiences and through songs, games, artwork, and crafts. We join the entire school in celebrating the holidays such as: performing the mitzvah of leyshev basukkah/visiting a sukkah and netilat lulav/ waving the lulav, the fun of Chanukah, Tu B'Shevat seder, and more. We hope to help each child find a source of significance and enrichment in Jewish living through Jewish values such as the practice of Tzedakah and Mitzvot, and a love for Israel. In keeping with the notion that young children thrive on consistency, sessions are structured so that schedule/routine each session remains relatively constant, while specific themes for that day's discussions, activities, projects, etc. vary during the course of the year. Connections are threaded among the weekly Torah portions, holidays, or community events and the experiences the students are likely to have had in their own lives.

Kitah Aleph students who were not previously "consecrated" to Jewish study as Gan students are presented with a miniature Torah at Simchat Torah children's services in the fall. (Consecration date for 2014: Thursday evening 10/16/14)

TEFILA GOALS:

- Participation in Family Friendly Shabbat Services when Hebrew School meets on Shabbat (2014/15: 10/25, 1/17, 2/13, 3/21).
- Participation in Junior Congregation. Learning the first line of Mi Chamocha and leading it during Junior Congregation.
- To review, or to learn for the first time:
 - Shabbat table blessings (candles, bread, wine/grape juice [up to borey pri hagafen])
 - the first line of the "Shema,"
 - the blessing for sitting in a sukkah,
 - the Chanukah candle blessings

TORAH GOALS:

- Families present weekly Torah portion highlights through an age appropriate story, skit, pictures, etc. during "Torah Time".
- Each session includes storytelling time, sometimes in conjunction with visits to the Ohavi Zedek library.

HOLIDAYS, CUSTOMS AND CONCEPTS:

- Students learn about Jewish holidays through stories, observances, customs and appropriate blessings and prayers.
- Arts and craft projects related to Jewish concepts.
- Arts and craft projects related to specific holidays.
- Learn 4 Questions by Pesach.

MODERN HEBREW GOALS:

- To learn all the letters of the Hebrew alphabet and to begin to learn vowel signs (including learning block printing of Hebrew letters).
- More exposure and repetition.
- To be exposed to spoken Hebrew in classroom activities.
- To begin learning modern Hebrew words and phrases.
- To introduce Hebrew vocabulary through playing games.
- To be able to read and write one's own Hebrew name.

STUDENT TEXTBOOK USED IN KITAH ALEPH:
"Let's Discover the Alef Bet" (K-1), by Sarah Feldman.

CURRICULUM GOALS FOR KITAH BET/ GRADE 2

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

As in younger grades, in Kitah Bet we continue to build a foundation for Jewish education and to provide a rich variety of experiences in Jewish observance and in the joy of Shabbat and holidays, through hands-on experiences and through songs, games, artwork, and crafts. We join the entire school in celebrating the holidays such as: performing the mitzvah of leyshev basukkah/visiting a sukkah and netilat lulav/ waving the lulav, the fun of Chanukah, Tu B'Shevat seder, and more. We hope to help each child find a source of significance and enrichment in Jewish living through Jewish values such as the practice of Tzedakah and Mitzvot, and a love for Israel. In keeping with the notion that young children thrive on consistency, sessions are structured so that schedule/routine each session remains relatively constant, while specific themes for that day's discussions, activities, projects, etc. vary during the course of the year. Connections are threaded among the weekly Torah portions, holidays, or community events and the experiences the students are likely to have had in their own lives.

TEFILA GOALS:

- Participation in Family Friendly Shabbat Services when Hebrew School meets on Shabbat (2014/15: 10/25, 1/17, 2/13, 3/21).
- Participation in Junior Congregation. Learning the Barechu and leading it during Junior Congregation.
- To review, or to learn for the first time:
 - Shabbat table blessings (candles, bread, wine/grape juice [up to borey pri hagafen])
 - the first line of the "Shema"
 - the first line ("Ma nishtanah...") and the first two of the "Four Questions"
 - the blessing for sitting in a sukkah
 - the Chanukah candle blessings
 - From the siddur: "Hiney Mah Tov", "Barchu", "Mi Chamocho", "Oseh shalom"

TORAH GOALS:

- Families present weekly Torah portion highlights through an age appropriate story, skit, pictures, etc. during "Torah Time".
- Each session includes storytelling time, sometimes in conjunction with visits to the Ohavi Zedek library.

HOLIDAYS, CUSTOMS AND CONCEPTS:

- Students learn about Jewish holidays through stories, observances, customs and appropriate blessings and prayers.
- Arts and craft projects related to specific holidays and Jewish concepts.
- Study of various mitzvot and of qualities associated with God. Opportunities to talk about own understandings of G-d.
- Review 4 Questions by Pesach.

MODERN HEBREW GOALS:

- Increased comfort with the Hebrew alphabet and vowels (both reading and printing).
- Putting letters and vowels together and reading whole words
- Continued exposure to spoken Hebrew in classroom activities.
- Increased Hebrew vocabulary through playing games.

STUDENT TEXTBOOK USED IN KITAH BET:

Shalom Alef Bet: A Pre-Primer for Shalom Uvrachah by Pearl Tarnor

CURRICULUM GOALS FOR KITAH GIMMEL/ GRADE 3

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

As in younger grades, in Kitah Gimmel we continue to build a foundation for Jewish education and to provide a rich variety of experiences in Jewish observance and in the joy of Shabbat and holidays, through hands-on experiences and through songs, games, artwork, and crafts. We join the entire school in celebrating the holidays such as: performing the mitzvah of leyshev basukkah/visiting a sukkah and netilat lulav/ waving the lulav, the fun of Chanukah, Tu B'Shevat seder, and more. We hope to help each child find a source of significance and enrichment in Jewish living through Jewish values such as the practice of Tzedakah and Mitzvot, and a love for Israel.

Particular emphasis in Kitah Gimmel is placed on beginning to learn Hebrew as a meaningful language, with an emphasis on modern Hebrew but with inclusion of vocabulary related to holiday observances.

Students in Kitot Gimmel, Dalet, Hey and Vav (Grades 3 through 6) participate in Shiurei Bechirah (Elective Classes) for part of the Wednesday afternoon Hebrew School sessions for several weeks during each semester. Electives vary each semester but in recent semesters have included such offerings as: klezmer band, cooking, gardening, yoga, art, photography, theatre, creative writing, yearbook, mah jongg - all with Jewish themes.

TEFILA GOALS:

- Participation in Family Friendly Shabbat Services when Hebrew School meets on Shabbat (2014/15: 10/25, 1/17, 2/13, 3/21).
- Participation in Junior Congregation. Learning the first 8 lines of the Ashrei and leading it during Junior Congregation.

TORAH GOALS:

- Families present weekly Torah portion highlights during "Torah Time."
- What is the Torah? Weekly discussion and exploration of Torah.

HOLIDAYS, CUSTOMS AND CONCEPTS:

- Students learn about Jewish holidays through stories, observances, customs and appropriate blessings and prayers.
- Continued reflection and development of personal approaches to G-d and holiness with introduction of a Jewish vocabulary for doing so.
- Arts and craft projects related to specific holidays and Jewish concepts.
- Introduction to basic principles of kashrut (dietary laws) and eco-Judaism
- Visiting a sukkah and reciting appropriate prayers.
- Review 4 Questions by Pesach.

MODERN HEBREW GOALS:

- Initial review of Hebrew letters, vowels and decoding.
- Learning to (or reviewing existing knowledge of how to) write Hebrew letters in both block print and script.
- Putting words together and reading whole sentences.
- Writing all letters in block.

STUDENT TEXTBOOKS USED IN KITAH GIMMEL:

Shalom Uvracha Primer Express (Behrman House)

Partners with God (Behrman House)

CURRICULUM GOALS FOR KITAH DALET/ GRADE 4

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

As in younger grades, in Kitah Dalet we continue to build a foundation for Jewish education and to provide a rich variety of experiences in Jewish observance and in the joy of Shabbat and holidays, through hands-on experiences and through songs, games, artwork, and crafts. We join the entire school in celebrating the holidays such as: performing the mitzvah of leyshev basukkah/visiting a sukkah and netilat lulav/ waving the lulav, the fun of Chanukah, Tu B'Shevat seder, and more.

Particular emphasis in Kitah Dalet is placed on developing a relationship with secular Hebrew culture and society, including an appreciation of Israeli geography and daily life.

Students in Kitot Gimmel, Dalet, Hey and Vav (Grades 3 through 6) participate in Shiurei Bechirah (Elective Classes) for part of the Wednesday afternoon Hebrew School sessions for several weeks during each semester. Electives vary each semester but in recent semesters have included such offerings as: klezmer band, cooking, gardening, yoga, art, photography, theatre, creative writing, yearbook, mah jongg - all with Jewish themes.

TEFILA GOALS:

- Participation in Family Friendly Shabbat Services when Hebrew School meets on Shabbat (2014/15: 10/25, 1/17, 2/13, 3/21).
- Participation in Junior Congregation. Learning the first 3 paragraphs of Baruch She'Amar and leading it during Junior Congregation.
- Increased comfort and facility with basic synagogue prayers included in Hebrew School services.
- Words for G-d and their different attributes.
- What is prayer?

TORAH GOALS:

- Weekly discussion of Torah portion highlights and ethical and philosophical questions arising from study of Torah stories.

HOLIDAYS, CUSTOMS AND CONCEPTS:

- Arts and craft projects related to specific holidays and Jewish concepts.
- Learn the geography and secular culture of contemporary Israel.
- Sing Hatikvah.
- Coordination with OZ library for use in student research projects.

MODERN HEBREW GOALS:

- Initial review of Hebrew letters, vowels (nekudot) and decoding.
- Putting sentences together and reading whole paragraphs.
- Introduction to grammar and verb structure.
- Decoding Hebrew in prayers.

STUDENT TEXTBOOKS USED IN KITAH DALET:

Shalom Ivrit book 1 (Behrman House)

Shalom Ivrit book 1 Prayer Companion (Behrman House)

Artzeinu: An Israel Encounter (Torah Aura)

CURRICULUM GOALS FOR KITAH HEY/GRADE 5

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The goal of Kitah Hey (Grade 5) is to make Judaism increasingly relevant to student's daily lives. We strengthen and increase their Hebrew vocabulary and teach our collective history, from ancient to modern American Jewry. The year also includes an extended unit on Kashrut (the Jewish dietary laws) plus study of the Jewish life cycle.

Students in Kitot Gimmel, Dalet, Hey and Vav (Grades 3 through 6) participate in Shiurei Bechirah (Elective Classes) for part of the Wednesday afternoon Hebrew School sessions for several weeks during each semester. Electives vary each semester but in recent semesters have included such offerings as: klezmer band, cooking, gardening, yoga, art, photography, theatre, creative writing, yearbook, mah jongg - all with Jewish themes.

TEFILA GOALS:

- Participation in Family Friendly Shabbat Services when Hebrew School meets on Shabbat (2014/15: 10/25, 1/17, 2/13, 3/21).
- Participation in Junior Congregation. Learning the v'Ahavta and leading it during Junior Congregation.
- Master all prayers from earlier grades.

TORAH GOALS:

- Weekly discussion of Torah portion highlights and ethical and philosophical questions arising from study of Torah stories.
- Study of key Torah stories including special emphasis on the Book of Exodus, using modern curriculum that emphasizes roles of women in the Exodus stories.
- What is the Talmud?
- What is the Gemorrah?

HOLIDAYS, CUSTOMS AND CONCEPTS:

- Study of highlights of Jewish history (post-biblical through early 20th century).
- Study of Jewish life cycle events.
- Review of kashrut.
- Eco-Judaism and Jewish agricultural practice.
- The Jewish lunar calendar including Hebrew months.
- Celebration of holidays throughout the year.
- Coordination with OZ library for use in student research projects.

MODERN HEBREW GOALS:

- Initial review of Hebrew letters, vowels and decoding.
- Continue to develop reading competency.
- Understanding of Hebrew sentence structure and grammar in the present tense and expressions of possession.
- Special emphasis on vocabulary connected with Jewish values.
- Increased conversation.

STUDENT TEXTBOOKS USED IN KITAH HEY:

Shalom Ivrit: Welcome to Modern Hebrew, vol. 2 (Behrman House)

Prayer Companion to Shalom Ivrit 2 (Behrman House)

History of the Jewish People, Vol. 1: Ancient Israel to 1880's America by Jonathan D. Sarna and Jonathan B. Krasner (Behrman House)

The Life Cycle Journey: A Workbook for Jewish Students by Risa Towbin Aqua and

Hal Aqua (Behrman House)

CURRICULUM GOALS FOR KITAH VAV /GRADE 6

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The goal of Kitah Vav (Grade 6) is to help students to begin the journey towards Jewish maturity. The curriculum affords them opportunities to develop the intellectual and spiritual resources for connecting with the three main components of Jewish identity: God (theology and spirituality), Torah (our literary and ethical heritage as Jews) and Israel (connection to the Jewish people and our ancestral homeland). Hebrew language study includes both modern conversational and classical liturgical forms of the language. Particular emphasis is placed on Shabbat morning prayers and on Havdalah (the ceremony that ends Shabbat on Saturday evening). Study of significant Torah stories is augmented by introduction to the history and process of midrash. Students learn trop (traditional cantillation modes for Haftarah and Torah) in preparation for Bar/Bat Mitzvah studies that they will pursue the following year in Kitah Zayin (Grade 7). Kitah Vav also includes a special focus on the development of Zionism from the 19th century to the early years of the State of Israel, including student reenactments of the Dreyfus trial and the sixth Zionist Congress.

Students in Kitot Gimmel, Dalet, Hey and Vav (Grades 3 through 6) participate in Shiurei Bechirah (Elective Classes) for part of the Wednesday afternoon Hebrew School sessions for several weeks during each semester. Electives vary each semester but in recent semesters have included such offerings as: klezmer band, cooking, gardening, yoga, art, photography, theatre, creative writing, yearbook, mah jongg - all with Jewish themes.

TEFILA GOALS:

- Participation in Family Friendly Shabbat Services when Hebrew School meets on Shabbat (2014/15: 10/25, 1/17, 2/13, 3/21).
- Participation in Junior Congregation. Learning the first 8 lines of Aleinu and then the last 5 lines and leading it during Junior Congregation.
- Introduction to trope.
- Learn Havdalah prayers and ceremony.

TORAH GOALS:

- Study of key stories from throughout the five books of the Torah. Special emphasis on creative projects such as art midrash, original dramatic re-enactments, and philosophical debates arising from issues raised in Torah.
- Weekly discussion and exploration of Torah using other religious texts.

HOLIDAYS, CUSTOMS AND CONCEPTS:

- Discussion of Jewish current events.
- Study of the development of modern Zionism from 19th century Europe through the early years of the State of Israel.
- Coordination with OZ library for use in student research projects.
- Plan and undertake individual mitzvah projects starting in January.

MODERN HEBREW GOALS:

- Thorough review of basic Hebrew grammar and structure.
- Reading Hebrew phonetically with ease.
- Reading practice focused on Biblical and Rabbinic Hebrew.
- Continued Hebrew conversation.

STUDENT TEXTBOOKS USED IN KITAH VAV:

Yesh Lanu Lama (Behrman House)

Selected readers from the Hebrew comic book series "Og Harasha" (EKS)

Parashat Hashavua: Reading Genesis (Behrman House)

Parashat Hashavua: Reading Exodus through Deuteronomy (Behrman House)

CURRICULUM GOALS FOR KITAH ZAYIN /GRADE 7

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The goal of Kitah Zayin (Grade 7) is to round out students' basic Jewish education while they prepare for their transition to the status of Bar or Bat Mitzvah, and to motivate them to continue their engagement with Jewish living and learning throughout the years to come.

The Sunday morning Kitah Zayin curriculum includes study of the rabbinic text Pirkei Avot (a classic compendium of Jewish ethical teachings found in the Mishnah [c. 200 C.E.]), using this text as a vehicle for exploring issues of personal identity, relationships and societal commitments. They will further their understanding of these values through participation in 'chevruta' style learning where they will study

with partners. With this understanding, they will begin to create their own drashes.

Sundays include learning to chant the Amida and lead it during Junior Congregation. Kitah Zayin will create and prepare to lead our Family Friendly Service on April 5th.

On Wednesdays, they spend the first hour learning the prayers and gaining the tools they need for their B'nai Mitzvah including the reading and chanting of trop/cantillation. We use a variety of learning styles: reading the Hebrew together, singing the melodies, and discussing both the specifics and the larger view of what constitutes a Shabbat morning service. Rabbi Jan meets with each student outside of class at the beginning of the school year, and plans with that student the weekly tutoring schedule that will meet the students' needs for completing the B'nai Mitzvah process.

Students also meet individually with Rabbi Joshua during the last couple of months before their respective Bar/Bat Mitzvah dates to craft a short speech (dvar torah) and, more generally, to reflect upon the significance of what the student is experiencing in becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

During the second hour on Wednesdays, they have a series of mini courses touching on a myriad of Jewish related subjects including Conversational Hebrew, Modern Jewish History, the Holocaust, Israel Today, Jewish Current Events and Eco-Judaism. These subjects will use discussion, drama, art, videos and other media for learning.

For greater familiarity, comfort and experience before their bnai mitzvah, Kitah Zayin students (and their parents) are expected to attend Ohavi Zedek Shabbat morning services a minimum of 10 times during the school year including our Family Friendly Shabbat Service dates (2014/15: 10/25, 1/17, 2/13, 3/21).

Kitah Zayin students are expected to be engaged in their chosen mitzvah project throughout the school year.

Kitah Zayin students are presented with their own siddur at the Simchat Torah celebration in the fall. (date for 2014: Thursday evening 10/16/14)

STUDENT TEXTBOOKS AND USED IN KITAH ZAYIN:

Making a Difference: Putting Jewish Spirituality Into Action, One Mitzvah at a Time by Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson and Gila Gevirtz (Behrman House)

A Bridge to Our Tradition: Pirkei Avot by Nachama Skolnik Moskowitz (URJ Press)

Art of Cantillation (UAHC Press)