



Each year at JEWL focuses on building a love and passion for Judaism grounded in Jewish values and nourished by art, music, and the natural world. As they connect with Jewish heritage, texts, the Hebrew language, and Israel, our learners will see themselves reflected in Judaism to instill a sense of belonging. Exploring the diversity of Jewish tradition, from Shabbat ritual to ethical tenets, allows students to make informed choices about their own Jewish behavior. Wrestling with beliefs about God elevates curiosity to a sense of wonder as our learners develop spiritually.

Here are some details of grades Gan (K) through Hey (5).

**Gan (kindergarten) weekly experiences empower learners to:**

**Build** a community—relationship by relationship—through small group learning so that learners will get to know every other student in the class. Listening to and communicating with one another lays the groundwork for a sense of belonging through high school and beyond, fostering lifelong friendships.

**Explore** the weekly Torah portion through visual depictions and stories. A family-wide consecration service in the fall celebrates the beginning of our children’s lifelong education. Learners will receive a mini Torah scroll, a reminder of Jewish values and heritage.

**Gain** a spiritual foundation by reciting and understanding the words of the Shema, integrating a belief in one God with the idea of being God’s partner in making the world a better place. We inspire wonder in our learners by teaching mitzvot as the “jobs” we do as God’s partners. We express appreciation for that partnership through prayer, such as the blessings we say for grape juice and challah.

**Integrate** Hebrew words related to holidays and rituals and everyday words for colors, animals, people, parts of the body, and foods.

**Practice** gratitude for what we have and become aware that not everyone has all they need. Each class creates a tzedakah box that will be a visual reminder of people we will be helping.

**Focus** on the value of G’milut Chasadim, acts of loving kindness. Students develop relationships with Temple Israel’s clergy and their special friend, “Chaim Chesed,” who helps teach this important mitzvah. Students also broaden this theme by bringing in examples of kindness they see outside of JEWL.

## Aleph (grade 1) weekly experiences empower learners to:

**Build** a warm classroom climate as well as a rich learning environment through learning together in chevruta—pairs or small groups—in which learners support and further each other’s learning.

**Explore** the weekly Torah portions and create a classroom “Visual Torah.” These artistic expressions increase our learners’ connection with the Torah and enhance their understanding of its timeless lessons. Modern-day stories strengthen these values.

**Increase** their understanding of Jewish beliefs by reading the Shema as a b’rit, a covenant between God and the Jewish people. Learners delve into the concept of “Israel” as a people and a place. We broaden the concept of mitzvot as personal responsibilities, exploring them through literature, art, and classroom projects.

**Expand** a Hebrew vocabulary base with categories of everyday words.

**Practice** gratitude by exploring the prayerbook’s daily blessings for who we are, what we have, and what we experience. We also deepen our awareness of people’s basic needs and consider ways we can help them through tzedakah and other ways to give.

**Focus** on the value of derech erez, acting responsibly and respectfully. Throughout the year, learners receive recognition for personal actions that reflect derech erez.

## Bet (grade 2) weekly experiences empower learners to:

**Deepen** chevruta-style (paired or small group) learning that nurtures established relationships, encourages new friendships, fosters personal creativity, and reinforces the power of the collective to strengthen ideas.

**Explore** Torah stories from the weekly portion with an emphasis on the journeys and characters of individual biblical personalities.

**Commit** to a classroom covenant of personal responsibilities to create a safe and effective learning environment while exploring various biblical partnerships, each called a b’rit.

**Integrate** simple Hebrew sentence usage with directions for games and activities. Learners will also focus on Hebrew words relating to Passover, begin to sing the Four Questions of the Passover seder, and create a personalized Four Questions keepsake.

**Focus** on the value of kavod, honoring our fellow human beings. Each week a student is recognized for their efforts in or out of the classroom and given a Kol Ha’Kavod award, meaning “all the respect” or “way to go!”

**Cultivate** honor and empathy for others. In addition to continuing a class tzedakah practice, learners will broaden their perspectives of the world by discussing homelessness and designing creative children’s games for families Temple Israel hosts through the Families Moving Forward program.

## Gimel (grade 3) twice-weekly experiences empower learners to:

**Build** a warm, socially integrated, and inquiry-based learning environment based around a chevruta (paired or small group) model of study. Learners have opportunities to “show what they know” and become teachers as pairs and in small groups, sharing their ideas and their accomplishments.

**Explore** each weekly Torah portion with opportunities to read the text translated into English, and begin to recognize words as learners decode Hebrew over the course of the year. Learners explore their feelings about each portion, the lessons they find in it, and how those messages relate to today’s world.

**Broaden** their appreciation of Hebrew as a language through their formal study of the alef-bet. Students learn the sounds of letters and vowels and apply their knowledge to reading and writing. Their daily use of functional Hebrew vocabulary is complemented by games, common phrases, and words of the day.

**Embrace** the mitzvah of rodef tzedek, pursuing justice, and the ways in which they can actively contribute to a more just world. Learners explore opportunities to be up-standers rather than bystanders and share their ideas about people, places and organizations that could benefit from their donations for tzedakah.

**Integrate** the value of menschlichkeit as a standard of personal behavior. Explore the rabbinic sage Hillel’s threefold teaching on caring for self, for others, and the call to seize opportunities to act with integrity at every moment. Students are honored as a “Mensch of the Week.”

## Dalet (grade 4) twice-weekly experiences empower learners to:

**Expand** their knowledge of Torah to include rabbinic teachings, including a special focus on wisdom literature. Chevruta pairs explore texts from *Pirkei Avot* to seek meaning for their lives today and compose their own ethical teachings.

**Master** the V’ahavta paragraph of the Shema for reading fluency and explore the mitzvot associated with it—love of God, importance of learning throughout our lives, rituals connected to these words such as mezuzot and tefillin, and the idea of being holy. Learners solidify their studies through action as role models for younger students.

**Build** upon their Hebrew reading skills by advancing to reading for comprehension. Learners also begin to amass a wider vocabulary and learn about three-letter roots of Hebrew words. Students provide new Hebrew reading material by submitting their favorite book from which a small excerpt is translated to Hebrew, a favorite tradition entitled “Hebrew Mystery Stories.”

**Seek out** opportunities for hachnasat orchim, welcoming guests, and consider how a host can make an impact on their guests. Learners will explore how daily blessings, in addition to expressing gratitude, call us to support the human needs of others. Learners create polar fleece blankets for families staying at Temple Israel through the Families Moving Forward program.

**Focus** on the value of shalom, peace, whether between people or between nations, with a special emphasis on sh’lom bayit, peace within our homes. The mafte’ach (key) recognition reiterates the concept of gaining the “keys” to building a warm, kind, and peaceful environment, at home and with the wider world.

## Hey (grade 5) twice-weekly experiences empower learners to:

**Search** for kushiyot, thoughtful questions about texts, and explore commentaries on the Torah. Students develop a greater sense of ownership of Jewish texts as they approach their b’nai mitzvah years, amidst a legacy of stories, questions, and thoughtful dialogue and debate.

**Act** based on their understanding of daily mitzvot. Creating dramatic role-plays for themselves and younger learners allows them to explore different ways they might act in particular situations. Learners also focus on sh’mirat ha’adamah, caring for the earth, as they explore sustainability issues at Temple Israel and in the wider world.

**Integrate** Hebrew reading with understanding of Shabbat liturgy. Learners consider how language shapes ideas about God, and begin to understand words of Bar’chu, Kiddush, Yotzer, and Veshamru, which they lead during JEWL Ruach programs. Creative Hebrew stories are also included to strengthen their reading and expand their vocabulary.

**Plan** the next steps on their personal and collective journeys of menschlichkeit, tzedakah, and tikkun olam as they approach the b’nai mitzvah years together.

**Lead** by designing activities for younger students that showcase their own Jewish knowledge and pride. In the second half of the year, learners experience three leadership tracks:

1. Madrichim: Assist in JEWL classrooms with younger learners.
2. Intentionality in Prayer: Create meaningful personal prayers.
3. Wrestle with Judaism: Study with Temple Israel’s clergy on student-driven topics.