

# San Diego Jewish Academy Golda Meir Lower School Kindergarten Judaic Studies Curriculum

## Ivrit / Hebrew

### Philosophy of Hebrew Language and Literature at SDJA

Our Hebrew language program is an integral part of the curriculum. Hebrew is a key that opens the doors of Jewish learning and connects us with Jews past and present. It is both the language of classical Jewish texts - from the TANAKH (Bible) to the SIDDUR (prayer book) -- and the modern, living language that unites us with Israel.

We seek to have our students develop facility in speaking, understanding, reading and writing Hebrew. Our Hebrew program is taught through the immersion process (*ivrit b'ivrit*) wherein the teacher speaks in Hebrew and the goal is for students to do the same. The ability to speak Hebrew with confidence will enable our students and graduates to feel at home in Israel and to communicate with Jews around the world.

Students will be able to:

- Master letter recognition of Hebrew Alphabet.
- Follow basic directions in Hebrew (e.g. "please sit", "time to get up", "time to clean up...").
- Recognize basic vocabulary that will help them develop basic communication skills.

## Tanakh / Bible

### Philosophy of Bible Study at SDJA

An integral part of the Judaic Studies curriculum at San Diego Jewish Academy is the study of the *TANAKH* (Bible)\* because it is the source of the spiritual history, literature and values of our people. It is the foundation of our Jewish civilization and the source of the ethical and ritual *MITZVOT* (commandments), which have been central to Jewish life throughout the ages. It is the record of what the Jewish people have understood as the basis and meaning of the covenant between G-d and the Jewish people.

We teach both the simple, literal understanding of the text as written (*pshat*) and the interpretive understandings of the text (*drash*) at appropriate grade levels, always maintaining the distinction between the two. While both are integral to the study of Torah, teachers are expected to distinguish between them when teaching Torah to their students. Through the study of classical and modern day commentaries and interpretations, alongside the literal text, we are encouraging our students to analyze, interpret and internalize the original text as it relates to their lives today and as a guide for their lives in the future.

As a pluralistic school, we recognize that our students and their families reflect a range of perspectives on Torah. As a community school, we acknowledge a variety of perspectives in our teaching and share this with our students in age-appropriate ways. We concentrate our studies on the content and meaning of the text.

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\*The TANAKH includes the TORAH (Five Books of Moses) as well as the NEVIIM (Early and Latter Prophets) and the KETUVIM (Writings).

Students will be exposed to basic stories throughout the *Torah* and be:

- Able to describe key Biblical figures. (Including but not limited to the patriarchs and matriarchs.)
- Able to recount key events in the Torah (e.g. the story of creation, Noah and the flood, Avraham and Sarah, and the story of Joseph).
- Introduced to the concept of *parashat hashavuah*, the weekly Torah portion.
- Exposed to Jewish values that are based in the Bible.

## **Jewish Holidays**

San Diego Jewish Academy strongly believes that observing the Jewish holidays enhances Jewish life on a consistent basis. To that end, each year students are engaged in studying the meaning and observances of *Shabbat*, *Rosh Hodesh*, *Rosh Hashanah*, *Yom Kippur*, *Sukkot*, *Simhat Torah*, *Hanukkah*, *Tu B'Shevat*, *Purim*, *Pesach*, *Yom Ha'atzmaut*, *Lag Ba'Omer*, and *Shavuot* through a variety of teaching methods and practices. In addition to this, and through the assistance of our PTO, we are able to provide unique opportunities for our students to mark these special occasions on the calendar.

Students will be able to:

- Identify basic key terms associated with each of the Jewish holidays.
- Identify the key symbols associated with each of the Jewish holidays.
- Recall the rituals and customs associated with each of the Jewish holidays.
- Recite basic blessings associated with each of the Jewish holidays.

## **Tefilah (prayer)**

*Tefilah* links Jews from the past to the present. Students participate in prayer services on a daily basis. During this time, students learn both the *kevah* (fixed words and times) and *kavannah* (meaning and intention) of the prayers for the weekday and *Shabbat* service. Every Friday afternoon, students participate in a grade-wide *Kabbalat Shabbat* service to anticipate the arrival of *Shabbat*.

## **Israel**

Recognizing the significance of the State of Israel, its national institutions, and our strong bonds to the land and the people of Israel, we seek to instill in our students a connection to Israel as well as a sense of responsibility for its future.

## **Jewish Life & Thought**

Building a foundation for Jewish ethical living is integral to the curriculum of San Diego Jewish Academy. We teach these values through a unique approach that includes a wide range of Jewish perspectives about our relationship with one another, our relationship with G-d, and our responsibility as Jewish individuals. Embedded in this curriculum are projects that help our students put these Jewish values into action.

Students learn basic concepts including:

- The Ten Commandments
- *Shabbat*
- *Mezuzah*
- Values of the classroom and how we treat one another.

## **Special Jewish Events Include:**

- SDJA Celebrates Integration
- *Sukkot* and *Chanukah* celebrations
- Ongoing *Tikkun Olam* Projects
- Special grade-wide event that culminates a unit of study – A Passover Celebration.