



## Religious School at Oak Park Temple

*At Oak Park Temple, the goal of our Religious School is to touch the heart, mind and soul of every student from kindergarten through high school and foster a love of Jewish learning that will continue through adulthood. Our curriculum focuses on the study of Hebrew, Torah, Prayer as well as Jewish values, ethics and history.*

### **GAN/KINDERGARTEN - Sundays, 9:30-12:00**

In this introductory year of religious school, students will be exposed to the Aleph-Bet (Hebrew alphabet), the yearly cycle of Jewish holidays, and stories from the Torah. Students will be introduced to important Jewish values.

### **1<sup>st</sup> GRADE - Sundays, 9:30-12:00**

**Hebrew:** First grade students will continue learning the Aleph-Bet and begin reading Hebrew words. Students will learn several basic prayers, including Shabbat blessings and the Shema.

**Values:** Students will learn the concept of mitzvot (commandments) and discuss key examples.

**Community:** Students will learn about the synagogue as their Jewish home. Students will learn about the importance of Shabbat both in class and by sharing a Shabbat meal with other first grade families.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> GRADE - Sundays, 9:30-12:00**

**Hebrew:** Second grade is the critical year when students learn to read Hebrew. Students will review the Aleph-Bet, learn vowels, and read key Hebrew words. By the end of the year, most students will be able to read simple brachot (blessings).

**Holidays:** Students will deepen their understanding of the Jewish calendar and the major holidays of the Jewish year.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> GRADE - Sundays, 9:30-12:00 and Wednesdays, 7:00-8:00 pm**

**Hebrew and Prayer:** With the addition of a second day of religious school each week, students will have a greater opportunity to become proficient in reading Hebrew. Students will master basic brachot (blessings), including the Barchu, holiday blessings and the Four Questions.

**Values and G-d:** Students will continue learning about Jewish values through regular discussions. They will discuss the role and meaning of G-d in their lives.

### **4<sup>th</sup> GRADE/5<sup>th</sup> GRADE - Sundays, 9:30-12:00 and Wednesdays, 7:00-8:00 pm**

On Wednesdays, students will continue their study of Hebrew prayers and brachot (blessings) in their respective grades. On Sundays, the two grades will be combined, and in small groups they will cycle through four classes, two each Sunday. The content will be different in subsequent years. The four classes are:

**Tanach (Text)** - Students will focus on key texts from the Torah, Prophets and Writings through reading and discussion.

**Holidays** - Students will progress to a deeper, more sophisticated understanding of the practice, history, and texts associated with each holiday (different holidays will be studied each year).

**Mitzvot/Famous Jews** - Different mitzvot will be covered by focusing on a famous Jewish figure who exemplifies the commandment being discussed. These famous Jews will come from the Torah, history, politics and sports.

## **Israel and the Diaspora**

Israel – Students will learn about the land and people of Israel, including customs, traditions, history, and about Tivon, our sister city. Politics is not the focus, but rather developing an appreciation for the state of Israel.

Diaspora - In alternating years, students will learn about Jews outside of Israel, in order to get a fuller understanding of the diversity of the Jewish experience. They will also learn about Daugivpils, our sister city in Latvia.

**4<sup>th</sup> grade retreat:** All fourth graders, along with at least one parent, will attend the Oak Park Temple congregational retreat in March. This is an opportunity to spend Shabbat together as a community and participate in a family learning experience.

### **6<sup>th</sup> GRADE - Sundays, 9:30-12:00 and Wednesdays, 7:00-8:00 pm**

**Hebrew/Prayers:** The key emphasis in this year's Hebrew curriculum is b'nai mitzvah preparation. This involves the Shabbat morning liturgy, including the blessings for the Torah and Haftorah.

**Tanach (Text)** - Students will learn about their b'nai mitzvah Haftorah portion and how it relates to the corresponding Torah portion.

**Life Cycle** - Students will conduct a comprehensive study of the Jewish traditions regarding birth, b'nai mitzvot, weddings, and death. The culmination will be participation by all students in a mock wedding.

**6<sup>th</sup> grade retreat:** As we transition to a 4<sup>th</sup> grade retreat, we will maintain a 6<sup>th</sup> grade retreat for the next two years. Like the 4<sup>th</sup> grade retreat, there is an expectation that at least one parent will attend.

### **7<sup>th</sup> GRADE - Jewish Text and History - Wednesdays, 7:00-8:30 pm**

**Tanach (Text):** Students will study various parshot (Torah portions) as a way to think critically about current issues in their own lives and in the larger world.

**European History/Holocaust:** Students will study the history, art and culture of the Eastern European shtetl, the contrasting experience of Jews in Western Europe and the history of the Holocaust.

### **8<sup>th</sup> GRADE - Jewish Ethics and Identity - Wednesdays, 7:00-8:30 pm**

Using a new curriculum, the Jewish Lens Program, students will explore Jewish values, texts, and identity. Through the use of photography, experientially based programs and class discussions, this program will allow students to explore their own connections to Judaism and K'lal Yisrael (the Jewish people).

### **9<sup>th</sup> GRADE - American Jewish History - Wednesdays, 7:00-8:30 pm**

This discussion based class focuses on the 350 years of the American Jewish experience. Students will explore how American Jewish identity has evolved through debate of controversial issues.

### **10<sup>th</sup> GRADE - Confirmation Class with Rabbi Weiss - Sunday mornings**

Students will discuss a variety of topics in order to learn how to think like a Jewish adult. Topics will vary based on the unique interests of students. Students will attend the Religious Action Center's high school seminar in Washington D.C, where they will learn about Jewish views on current political topics and will lobby their Congressional representatives. The year will culminate in a confirmation service in May.