

## Monroe Temple Torah School Curriculum by Grade

**Kindergarten:** Our Kindergarten year is full of art projects, stories, music, and important learning. The curriculum is designed for children to get to know our synagogue, clergy, and Jewish holiday cycle with an emphasis on Shabbat. The year begins with our Rabbi showing the class the Torah in the sanctuary, and it continues as the class tours the synagogue, learning about various Jewish holidays and getting to see, touch, listen to, and taste Jewish foods and ritual objects. Students attend a weekly children's K-2 guitar service led by our Education Director, as well as a weekly Jewish sing along session with our Cantor. One of the year's highlights is our annual Kindergarten Biblio-Drama in which students participate as characters in the narrative of a Jewish holiday story.

**1<sup>st</sup> Grade:** Our first grade curriculum introduces students to the book of Genesis, basic Hebrew words and prayers, the Hebrew alphabet, and important Jewish values such as Tzedakah, G'milut Chasadim (acts of love and kindness), Taking care of the earth, and Honoring the elderly. Through craft projects and story time, our first graders learn about Creation, Adam & Eve, Noah's Ark, Abraham and Sarah, Rebecca and Isaac, Jacob Leah and Rachel, and Joseph. In addition, our first graders build on what they have learned about the Jewish holidays, they continue to attend our weekly K-2 guitar service with our Education Director, and they continue their weekly singalongs with the Cantor. One of the highlights of the first grade year is our Consecration service- a meaningful life cycle event when the children are blessed by our Rabbi and presented with their very own mini Torahs.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Grade:** Our second grade curriculum focuses on Moses and the book of Exodus, connecting to God through blessings of praise and thanks, and being partners with G-d through acts of love and kindness. Second grade is also when students develop basic Hebrew letter and vowel recognition, and by the end of the year many can recite the Hebrew alphabet song, the Barchu, the Shema, and the blessings over Chanukah candles. The class continues to attend our weekly K-2 guitar service with our Education Director, as well as their weekly singalongs with the Cantor. One of the highlights of the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade year is our annual Hebrew Name Tile and Necklace Project, where students and parents work together, first telling stories of the origins of their Hebrew names, and then making keepsake tiles and necklaces with their Hebrew names.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Grade:** Third grade is when we get serious about Hebrew reading and writing. In third grade, Torah school switches from once a week (Sundays) to twice a week (Sundays and Tuesdays), and students move up to a more grown up (Grades 3-7) weekly service led by the Rabbi and Education Director. In third grade students work hard on Hebrew letter and vowel recognition, writing Hebrew Block, and basic decoding of Hebrew text. Another big component to our third grade curriculum is learning all about the land of Israel. Students learn about modern life in Israel, Israel's technological advancements, the diversity of people within Israel, and the geography of Israel. This cumulates in a large project where students and parents together research a city or attraction in Israel, and create a poster board advertising facts and pictures about their assigned Israel location. The students then present their projects to the class, and afterwards we display their work for the remainder of the year.

**4<sup>th</sup> Grade:** In fourth grade we get serious about learning Jewish prayers. Students receive their first prayer cards, and they are required to read and chant several prayers that we sing together during our weekly children's service and in our regular Shabbat services. The most challenging Hebrew prayer in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum is the V'Ahavta. As students learn to recite these important prayers, they also learn about the deep meanings and values associated with these prayers. The highlight of the fourth grade year is our annual 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Shabbat Dinner and Service. Leading up to this Shabbat, the children make their own challah covers and braid their own loaves of challah. On the night of the 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Shabbat, the class presents their challahs and challah covers to their parents, and they recite all of the Shabbat blessings before we sit down to a delicious Shabbat meal. Afterwards the 4<sup>th</sup> Graders lead part of the Shabbat service as a class, as they show off the prayer skills they have been learning.

**5<sup>th</sup> Grade:** The 5<sup>th</sup> Grade curriculum contains Hebrew prayer, teachings from the Prophets, and Torah Trope. Prayer: The 5<sup>th</sup> Grade learns the Amidah, the most central of all Hebrew prayers, in sections. Students learn how to read, chant, and locate the Amidah in our congregational siddur, and students learn the difference between the Shabbat and weekday versions of the prayer. Prophets: Grade 5 is a year where we learn summarized stories about important prophets, when they lived, their messages, and how they are interpreted by the Reform movement. Torah Trope: 5<sup>th</sup> Graders learn the cantillation of the Torah, which helps them correctly pronounce Hebrew words, and chant Torah without the use of recordings. One of the highlights of the year is our 5<sup>th</sup> grade Shabbat Service, when the class leads Amidah, explaining to the congregation the different sections of the prayer, and what each section means to them.

**6<sup>th</sup> Grade:** Our 6<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum focuses on Hebrew Prayers, study of the weekly Torah Portion, and Haftarah trope. Students learn the Kiddish, the Blessings before and after the reading of the Torah and Haftarah, as well as several prayers pertaining to a Shabbat Torah service. They discuss the construct of the Tanakh; broken down first by section, and then by Torah Portion and corresponding Haftarah. Toward the end of the year, our 6<sup>th</sup> graders demonstrate many of their skills at our annual 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Torah service. Another yearly 6<sup>th</sup> Grade tradition is our 6<sup>th</sup> Grade field trip to a Jewish museum. Every year the destination is different, but recent trips have included The Gomez Mill House, The Tenement Museum, and the Museum of Jewish Heritage.

**7<sup>th</sup> Grade:** The Seventh Grade curriculum is filled with projects and learning meaningful to students about to become Bar or Bat Mitzvah. The year begins with a 7<sup>th</sup> Grade breakfast, where the rabbi explains to students and parents what to expect in the coming year. Throughout the year students design their very own Yads and Wimples for their special day, and they have a beautiful 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Havdalah service! In the classroom students continue to learn Hebrew prayers, and they have more sophisticated discussions about Israel. In addition to their work in the classroom, each student is assigned his or her very own D'var Torah tutor. The tutor and the student will discuss the student's Torah portion over multiple sessions, and the tutor will help the student to craft a meaningful and personalized Devar Torah for his or her Bar or Bat Mitzvah. Students are also assigned their Torah and Haftarah portions in 7<sup>th</sup> Grade. They also work weekly and individually on Torah and Haftarah portions

with a tutor outside of class in preparation, before meeting with the rabbi in the weeks prior to Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

**8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> Grade:** Our Torah School Academy meets once a week on Wednesday evenings. The first half hour is for pizza, and socialization, grades 8-12. Then it is off to a one and a half hour class, with a fifteen minute break. Our Academy year is split into four quarters. For two of those quarters students take fun elective classes such as Jewish cooking, Guitar, Art, Film, The Jewish Book of Why, and for the other two quarters students take core requirements courses such as Holocaust, Talking About God, Zionism, History of Israel, or Comparative Religion.

**10<sup>th</sup> Grade:** Our Tenth Grade confirmation class meets weekly with the rabbi in the rabbi's office. This is a year where students learn about Tikkun Olam and advocacy. The highlight of the year is our annual RAC trip (Religious Action Center of the Reform Movement) where our rabbi takes the class on a long weekend trip to Washington DC, where students get to visit the RAC Center, and congress, as they get an understanding of how advocacy works in our political system. The year cumulates with a confirmation project and ceremony.

**11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Grade:** Our Academy Plus program meets every other Wednesday night. Here students meet in our library and discuss adult topics facing Modern Judaism. Sometimes the students pick the topics, other times the curriculum is geared toward Jewish life on a college campus. Here students learn about Hillel and Chabad, Birthright, and other Israel programs, or where to attend services away from home.