



Curriculum

Our Mission:

BJEP (Boston-area Jewish Education Program) is an independent and vibrant Jewish learning community. Through our interactive curriculum, we instill in our students a sense of joy and belonging within the Jewish community and knowledge of Jewish traditions and the Hebrew language.

We are committed to:

1. Cultivating each child's and family's authentic relationship with Judaism.
2. The creation and embodiment of *Torat Hayyim*, a living tradition. This commitment requires not only that our lives are informed by ancient wisdom and practices, but also that Jewish tradition learns and grows from our own insights and lived experiences.
3. *Tikkun Olam*, a concern for both our immediate world and the broader world in which we live.

Our Curriculum:¹

At BJEP we teach the ABC's of a Jewish education:

We strive to instill **Agency** over each child's Jewish identity, **Belonging** within Jewish community and **Competency** with Jewish traditions and Hebrew language.

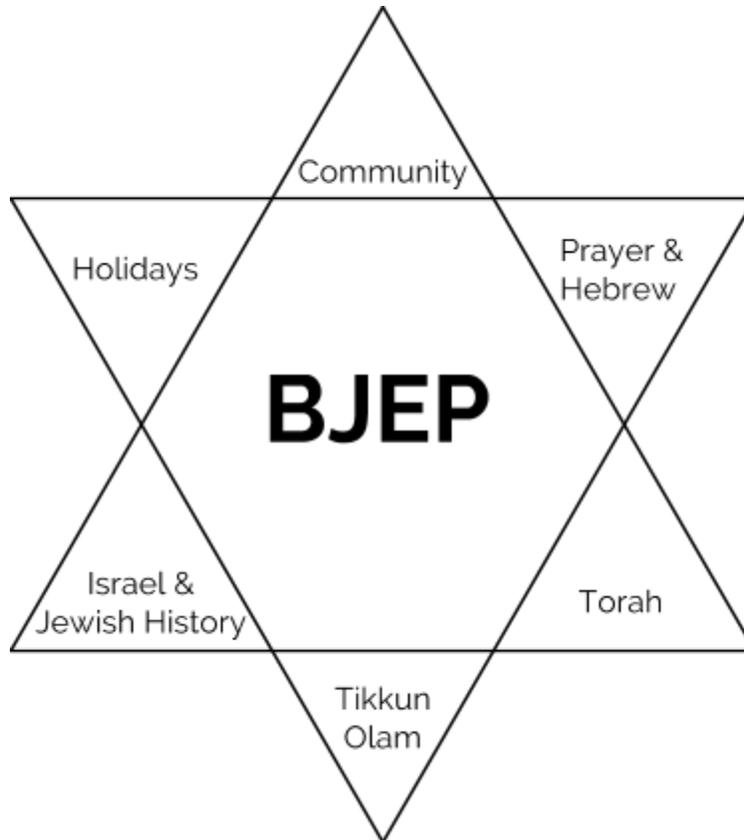
Each grade teaches both Judaics and Hebrew through an age-appropriate thematic focus with clear learning objectives.

Thematic Overview

At BJEP we believe a well-rounded Jewish education is important to a child's lifelong Jewish identity. We therefore see the development of foundational Jewish subjects as essential to student learning.

We have 5 areas of focus: Torah, Hebrew & Prayer, Tikkun Olam & Jewish Values, Israel & Jewish History, and Jewish Holidays. We consider community to be the implicit curriculum underlying and supporting all classroom learning.

¹ Documented by Rabbi Ari Lev Fornari in consultation with Beth R. Goldstein, RJE. Summer 2015.



Below is an overview of each of the subjects listed above:

Prayer & Hebrew

Our curriculum engages with Hebrew language using all of the senses. We understand that language acquisition happens through reception, expression, reading and production. Our students begin every Hebrew session with 10-15 minutes of Hebrew through Movement (HTM). From there, students learn Prayer Hebrew (PH) and basic modern Hebrew vocabulary. We believe it is important for students to not only be able to read the prayers, but also to understand their meaning.

Below are the prayers and vocabulary that each grade will focus on:

K/1: Sensory introduction to letters, Shema and Shehechianu

2nd Grade: Hebrew reading foundation, blessing formulas and Shabbat blessings

3rd Grade: Colors, Barchu, Shema review, Mi Chamocha and Four Questions

4th Grade: Numbers, V'ahavta, Havdalah and V'shamru

5th Grade: Body Parts, Amidah, L'cha Dodi, and Oseh Shalom

6th Grade: Synagogue vocab, Mourner's Kaddish, Torah Service, and Morning Blessings

7th Grade: Those who prepare for B'nei Mitzvah continue independently outside of BJEP

Torah

Studying Torah is an essential part of Jewish education. Torah study not only includes the five books of Moses, but also Prophets, Writings, the Oral Torah, Midrash and much more. We bring Torah to life, making the stories relevant to the lives of our students.

K/1: Torah as the concept of a holy book
2nd Grade: Torah Heroes
3rd: Grade: An Introduction to Genesis and Exodus
4th Grade: The Prophets and Modern Themes
5th Grade: God and Prayer in Torah
6th Grade: The Torah Service
7th Grade: Mitzvot in the Torah

Jewish Holidays

Every grade experiences the magic and wisdom of the Jewish holidays.

K/1: Stories & Symbols of the Jewish Calendar
2nd Grade: Shabbat and Holiday Heroes
3rd: Grade: Jewish values of the Holidays with a focus on Passover
4th Grade: Holidays through the Prophets
5th Grade: Holidays around the World
6th Grade: Jewish Lifecycle Events
7th Grade: Themes in Modern Times

Tikkun Olam and Jewish Values

Jewish values permeate classroom conversations throughout the year in both content and structure. Every class collects tzedakah, money dedicated to economic justice issues; this is a practice in generosity and raises social awareness. Additionally, every year we have a school-wide program on Martin Luther King Jr. weekend with a focus on Tikkun Olam/Social Justice issues. The 3rd, 4th and 7th grades have a special emphasis on Jewish Values and Tikkun Olam.

Israel and Jewish History

At BJEP students in all grades gain a better understanding of Israel as a people, a place and a modern state. By learning about Israel, students learn about themselves and their own personal Jewish history. By helping students connect to their past in this way, we also help them to forge a stronger connection to their Jewish identity.

K/1: Modern Israeli Holidays
2nd Grade: Shabbat in Israel
3rd: Grade: Sacred Community: Klal Yisrael
4th Grade: A mythic place: Ancient Israel in Torah and Prophets
5th Grade: Israel: A people and a place
6th Grade: American Jewish History
7th Grade: Holocaust Studies

Grade Based Objectives

Kindergarten and 1st Grade

In Kindergarten and 1st grade students gain a strong foundation in Jewish holidays, values and culture. We strive to develop a sense of wonder about Judaism. They learn about sacred time through stories, symbols and their senses. They follow the cycle of the year with a Jewish calendar wheel. Each class integrates art, movement, music and the students' imaginations.

Educational Goals:

- To expose students to the rhythm of the Jewish year through the holidays and the seasons.
- For students to recognize major objects, sounds and tastes of Jewish holidays observances.
- To introduce the concept of Torah as the sacred living story of the Jewish people.
- For students to experience a sense of being part of a Jewish community.
- To provide students with a sensory introduction to Hebrew Letters.
 - Hebrew letter recognition through crafts, songs, movement and yoga
- To introduce students to the prayers Shema and Shehechianu.
- Students will be able to recite prayers and understand the key meanings and times they are said

Guiding Questions:

- ❖ What makes time feel special?
- ❖ What are Jewish sounds, tastes, and smells?
- ❖ What are the cycles we experience in our lives?
- ❖ What does it mean to be a tree of life?
- ❖ What is a community? What communities are you a part of?

Core Books:

- ★ Alef Bet Yoga
- ★ Sammy the Detective - Alef Bet Mystery
- ★ Jewish Holiday Treasure Trail
- ★ What makes someone a Jew
- ★ The Kids Fun Book of Jewish Time

2nd Grade

The 2nd grade curriculum focuses on Shabbat and foundational Torah stories. The students learn about the many ways and reasons to celebrate Shabbat as they explore the concepts of holiness and sacred time. They learn about the Holidays Heroes, focusing on the major characters in our mythic stories.

Educational Goals:

- To expose students to the shapes and sounds of Hebrew letters and vowels.
- To introduce the technique of putting Hebrew letters and vowels together in order to begin to read Hebrew words.
- For students to read and understand Shabbat blessings and the "blessing formula".
- To review the concept of a solar/lunar calendar, including an understanding of days beginning at sunset, Hebrew months, and which holidays are found in each month,
 - To understand the cycle of the moon as a way to recognize Jewish time
- For students to begin to understand Jewish holidays through an exploration of the heroes (main characters) found in each holiday story.
- To introduce students to concepts related to the weekly holiday of Shabbat, including:
 - Shabbat candle blessings
 - Shabbat Kiddush (wine blessing)
 - HaMotzi (blessing for bread)
 - An understanding of the many reasons we celebrate Shabbat
- To expose students to key stories found in the Torah through an exploration of "Torah Heroes" in Genesis (main characters in the Torah stories).
 - Students will understand key people, places and plots

Guiding Questions:

- ❖ How are Hebrew letters the building blocks of words and ideas?
- ❖ What makes time holy?
- ❖ How do we make a day different?
- ❖ What is the best part of your week?
- ❖ Who would you be in each Jewish story?

Core Books:

- ★ Teach Me Torah 1&2

3rd Grade

There are three primary focuses for the 3rd grade: Torah Stories, Jewish Values and Passover rituals. Students study Torah with a focus on Genesis through the Passover story in Exodus. At the end of the spring semester, students take an in depth look at holiday of Passover, culminating in a 3rd grade family seder. In 3rd grade students begin to focus on Hebrew reading.

Educational Goals:

- For students to read/sing with mastery, based on each student's abilities, the prayers Barchu, Mi Chamocha and Shema.
- To introduce students to a brief description of the theme, as well as when and why a person would recite the prayers Barchu, Mi Chamocha and Shema.
- To expose students to colors in Hebrew.
- To provide students the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the stories, themes and characters in the books of Genesis and Exodus.
- To expose students to a fuller understanding of the Passover story.
- To offer students the opportunity to understand the symbols on the seder plate and in the seder.
- For students to sing with mastery based on each student's abilities and to understand the meaning of the four questions.
- To begin to understand the following Jewish values and relate them to students' lives and Jewish Holidays:
 - Tikkun Olam
 - L'Shon Hara - speaking kindly
 - Trust
 - Klal Yisrael/Sacred Community
 - Teamwork

Guiding Questions:

- ❖ How do we connect to the past through stories?
- ❖ What are our family traditions?
- ❖ What is freedom?
- ❖ What does it mean to be a mensch?

Core Books:

- ★ Shalom u'Vracha: Primer Express
- ★ Experiencing The Torah, Being Torah, Jewish Values in Genesis
- ★ Jewish Holidays/Jewish Values, The Haggadah, The Passover Seder by Emily Sper

4th Grade

Jewish tradition teaches: *Al Shlosha Devarim*, that the world is sustained by three things: by Torah - sacred stories; Avodah - prayer and practice; and Gemilut Hasadim - Acts of Kindness. The 4th grade curriculum rests on this sturdy footstool. Students deepen their study of Torah through the writings of the Prophets, particularly as they correspond to the major Jewish holidays. While learning Prophets, students examine ways in which the characteristics of the prophets can relate to their lives today. The 4th grade students learn about the ritual of Havdalah, which concludes Shabbat. They prepare and lead a community-wide Havdalah service. In addition, they develop a Chesed/Caring project that is informed by the voices of justice that they have been reading in the Prophets.

Educational Goals:

- For students to understand and appreciate the themes and purpose of Havdalah.
- For students to read and sing the Havdalah blessings with fluency based on each student's abilities.
- To expose students to numbers in Hebrew.
- For students to read/sing with mastery, based on each student's abilities, the prayers V'ahavta and V'shamru and the prayers in the Havdalah service.
- To introduce students to a brief description of the theme, as well as when and why a person would recite the prayers V'ahavta and V'shamru and the prayers in the Havdalah service.
- To provide students with an introduction to Prophets with a focus on Ruth, Esther, Jonah, Hannah, Elijah, Miriam, Amos and Isaiah, including an understanding of:
 - Where the books of the Prophets are found in the Bible, during which holiday they are read, and basic facts about each prophet.
 - Main characteristics found in each prophet which students see in other people today and hope to emulate.
- For students to have a deeper understand of Jewish holidays through an exploration of haftarot, prophetic readings corresponding with the Torah portions.
- To provide students with the opportunity to create projects that supports the Chesed/Caring community at BJEP.

Guiding Questions:

- ❖ Who are the prophets? What do you think made them prophets?
- ❖ Are there prophets today?
- ❖ What do you admire in each prophet?
- ❖ How can you contribute to the BJEP community?

Core Books:

- ★ Instant Lessons: Think Prophets & The Write Stuff
- ★ Explorer's Bible 2

5th Grade

The core concepts in the 5th grade are Israel: A People and a Place; and Prayer. Students explore the practices and histories of Jewish communities around the world, particularly in Jerusalem. Students receive their own prayer books which are for both study and use. They mark a milestone as they prepare for and lead a Friday evening Shabbat service.

Educational Goals:

- For students to read/sing with mastery, based on each student's abilities, the Amidah, L'cha Dodi and Oseh Shalom.
- To introduce students to a brief description of the theme, as well as when and why a person would recite the Amidah, L'cha Dodi, and Oseh Shalom.
- To expose students to the names of body parts in Hebrew.
- To provide students with an understanding of the main outline of a Friday evening Shabbat service.
- To introduce students to the main concepts in key Friday evening Shabbat prayers.
- To provide students with the opportunity to think creatively about what prayer and God means to them.
- To expose students to the idea that there are many and varied Jewish communities around the world.
- To taste and experience Jewish culture, including food, dance, music and melodies.
- To introduce students to Israel as a modern state including:
 - Key places in Israel
 - Key people who helped found the modern state of Israel
 - Main cultural aspects of the country, including food, dance, music, etc.

Guiding Questions:

- ❖ What is prayer?
- ❖ What is Israel?
- ❖ What are the many ways people can look and act Jewish around the world?

Core Books:

- ★ A Tale of 4 Cities
- ★ God Talk
- ★ Mishkan Tefillah Siddur/Prayer Book

6th Grade

The 6th grade curriculum begins to turn towards Bar and Bat Mitzvah preparation, as students think more deeply about their own Jewish identities and learn the structure of the Torah service. They learn about Jews in America both in Holiday observance in the US and through a study of American Jewish history. Students also study key Jewish lifecycle events. Finally, the 6th grade curriculum focuses a significant amount of time debating Jewish ethics. The highlight of the year is the Legacy Fair, where students share something about their own ancestry and lead a morning service.

Educational Goals:

- For students to read/sing with mastery, based on each student's abilities, the Mourner's Kaddish, Torah Service and Morning Blessings.
- To introduce students to a brief description of the theme, as well as when and why a person would recite the Mourner's Kaddish, Torah Service and Morning Blessings.
- To expose students to synagogue-related vocabulary in Hebrew.
- To provide students with a basic understanding of the history of Jews in America.
- For students to understand and appreciate the outline of the Torah service and morning prayers.
- To expose students to important American Jews who have influenced history, culture, science and more.
- To provide students the opportunity to explore a piece of their own Jewish history.
- To explore ethical dilemmas and ways in which Judaism can help students shape responses in their own lives..
- To expose students to the ceremonies and history of Jewish lifecycle events, including Bris/Baby Naming, Bar/Bat Mitzvah, Jewish weddings and Jewish funerals.

Guiding Questions:

- ❖ Where are your ancestors from and how does that shape your Judaism?
- ❖ Whose life has influenced who you are today?
- ❖ How does Judaism mark major moments in our lives?
- ❖ What does it mean to be a tzadik/righteous person?

Core Books:

- ★ You Be the Judge, Judaism's Great Debates
- ★ The Time of our Lives: A teen guide to the Jewish Life Cycle
- ★ Jewish Heroes, Jewish Values, Mishkan Tefillah Siddur/Prayer Book

7th Grade

Our task in the 7th grade is to help students to see themselves as responsible for their Jewish identities and as members of a Jewish community as they prepare to graduate BJEP. There are three main areas of study: The Nazi Holocaust, Tikkun Olam/Social Justice issues and Mitzvot. Students will explore 12 different Jewish practices of mitzvot. For those who choose to have a bar or bat mitzvah, that will serve as their 13th mitzvah. In addition, students learn themes in Jewish holidays which can relate to issues in the world today. In the spring, they participate in a group mitzvah project. The 7th grade begins to take on more leadership roles in school-wide programs as they begin to transition into the (optional) role of 8th grade Madrichim (teen aides).

Educational Goals:

- To expose students to mitzvot through an exploration of personal Jewish identity.
- To explore what it means to become a bar/bat mitzvah today.
- For students to understand and explore themes found in Jewish holidays and to relate these themes to issues in the world today.
- To provide students with the opportunity to act on issues in the world through a study of Tikkun Olam (repairing the world).
- To provide students with a basic introduction to the Holocaust through literature including:
 - Key events in history that led up to the Holocaust
 - Key historical events that occurred during the Holocaust
 - Key people
 - Begin to understand a connection between anti-Semitism and other social justice issues

Guiding Questions:

- ❖ What does it mean to become a bar/bat mitzvah?
- ❖ How can I help to make the world a more just place?
- ❖ What lessons can we learn from the Holocaust?

Core Books:

- ★ Echoes and Reflections
- ★ www.JustAction.org
- ★ Making a Difference
- ★ Drashah