



## CURRICULUM OVERVIEW FIFTH GRADE

### JUDAICA

As our students start to think about the important event coming up in their lives, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, we spend the year thinking about how to contextualize this one event within the larger Jewish life. Our Fifth Grade curriculum provides different pathways for relating to and understanding the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

At the beginning of the year, our Fifth Grade classes will learn about Jewish lifecycle events. They will discuss what makes each one an important moment in the course of someone's life, as well as why and how Judaism chooses to spotlight that particular moment. They will get to think about all of these Jewish lifecycle moments as one continuum in order to see how they all work together to build and mark someone's life within a spiritual community.

During the Jewish Lifecycle unit, we will focus on the following goals:

- To introduce students to various Jewish lifecycle rituals and events.
- To give students an opportunity to participate in/experience Jewish lifecycle events.
- To place Bar/Bat Mitzvah within the larger framework of Jewish life.
- To help students think about how Judaism supports us in key moments of our lives.

Next, our Fifth Graders will do some in-depth study of the Tanakh (the Hebrew Bible.) They will explore the different books that make up the Bible, how they fit together, and how to navigate the text. This will prepare our students to begin their Parasha Projects (which will kick off as part of our Fifth Grade Family Program) and put their Bar/Bat Mitzvah Torah portion in a larger context.

During the Tanakh unit, we will focus on the following goals:

- To teach students the structure of the Tanakh.
- To place the Torah in a larger context of Jewish text/thought/understanding.
- To expose students to the variety of genres found in the Tanakh.
- To familiarize students with part of what they will be chanting for their Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Finally, our Fifth Graders will spend the end of the year working on creating their Parasha Projects. The Parasha Project is an innovative and unique approach to Torah study in which each student has the chance to deeply engage in the text and become the teacher for their peers. During our Family Program, students and parents will uncover the ways that Jews engage in Torah study. They will practice this skill together using the Torah portion that their child will read when they become Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Students will spend the next few weeks of class time carefully reading and analyzing their Torah portion in order to determine what values the text can teach us. **Parents will be given information on how to check in on their student's progress at home and help them continue their work outside of class time.** Each student will come up with a way to teach their Fifth Grade community about the text. Students are encouraged to be innovative and creative! Parents will be invited to their child's presentation.

During the Parasha Project unit, we will focus on the following goals:

- To familiarize students with part of what they will be chanting for their Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
- To give students and their parents an opportunity to engage with the words and meaning of their text.
- To give students a space to present their ideas about Jewish texts to their peers and families.

### HEBREW

At Stephen Wise Free Synagogue's Religious School we work to ensure that every child is capable of decoding (reading without full comprehension) Hebrew prayers and blessings, and that they know and can define common Hebrew words and phrases. We want our students to see Hebrew as a living language of the Jewish people and to be able to use it to help them in prayer and in Jewish life. Our teachers strive to make Hebrew accessible and to ensure that every child's ability to decode improves each week.

In Fifth Grade, students will continue to improve their reading proficiency and increase their Hebrew vocabulary. They will review prayers taught in Third and Fourth Grade. Additionally, students will practice the Torah blessings and study their meaning. Students have the opportunity to reinforce their Hebrew skills and learn more about our prayers during tefilah (prayer services) each week.

By the end of the Fifth Grade year, we expect every student to be able to:

- Decode complex words/phrases and longer blessings in the first try.
- Self-correct when reading prayers and blessings.
- Decode the following prayers: Birchot HaTorah and Vahavta.
- Identify and define the following vocabulary (plus additional not listed): TANAKH, BRIT, KETUBAH, MITZVAH, BAR/BAT, TOARH, NEVIIM, KETUVIM.