



CURRICULUM OVERVIEW SIXTH GRADE

JUDAICA

The focus of our Sixth Grade curriculum is theology and personal belief systems. Through texts and multi-media, our students will confront different images for God. They will debate what is and is not a Jewish image of God and whether those images are something that they feel comfortable incorporating into their own personal theology. Students will engage with Jewish theological texts, Tanakh, Star Wars, and more as they think about questions such as what role does God play in our world. We will ask our students to think about the ways their belief in God has changed throughout their lives and guide them to create a theology that will help them to grow into their teenage years.

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

- To encourage students to articulate their God concepts.
- To introduce students to multiple Jewish concepts of God.
- To challenge students to find new ways to relate to God.
- To show students that asking questions is part of Judaism.

At the end of the year, our Sixth Grade students will spend a few weeks studying the *mitzvah* of *tzedakah*. They will learn about what it means to create a more just and righteous world and how the act of donating time, money, and energy can do that. It will be their responsibility to learn about and research various organizations that they believe are important and make our world a better place. Students will create presentations for our Religious School Director and other synagogue stakeholders to argue for where they believe our school's *tzedakah* money should be donated.

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

- Students will study the concept of *tzedakah* and gain a deeper understanding of its meaning and what makes it a core Jewish value.
- Students will think about how to make an impact with the *tzedakah* money that our school has collected this year.

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.

By Sixth Grade, we expect our students to be able to effectively read and manage most prayers in our *siddur*. In our Sixth and Seventh Grade program, students will have the opportunity to choose from a few different Hebrew courses to continue their Hebrew learning:

- Prayer Review and Skill Review – For students who need more work to improve their fluidity in Hebrew reading and to improve their prayer reading skills.
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah Review – For students who have begun Bar/Bat Mitzvah Tutoring, and would like an extra chance to review their Torah & Haftarah portions with a trained teacher
- Modern Hebrew – For students who want to engage in modern, conversational Hebrew. Students who choose this must have good Hebrew reading ability.

During the Sixth and Seventh Grade years, we will focus on the following goals:

- Students will continue their Hebrew language learning and improve their Hebrew reading skills in a way that is meaningful, effective, and helpful for them.
- Students will have the choice to work on their prayer reading skills, to have extra time to review their Bnai Mitzvah materials or to learn more conversational Hebrew.

Family Bar/Bat Mitzvah Learning Sessions: Sixth Graders and their parents will come together a few times throughout the year to participate in our Bar/Bat Mitzvah Cohort meetings. These learning sessions will create a close-knit community of learners/families who are all on the same path studying towards becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Students and their families will learn about the process of study, rituals related to becoming a Jewish adult, as well as an understanding of the social action and social service projects that students will participate in. This experience will help sharpen their identities as Jewish adults and enable them to be comfortable and active members of the Stephen Wise Free Synagogue community and larger Jewish community.