



## CURRICULUM OVERVIEW SEVENTH GRADE

Our seventh-grade curriculum focuses on human responsibility, and the Jewish texts that inspire and inform how we take care of ourselves, other people, and the world. This curriculum seeks to provide a Jewish context for:

- Intrapersonal duty – what we owe ourselves.
- Interpersonal accountability – the ways we are obligated and bound to others.
- Global responsibility – how we function as global citizens.

These concepts are summarized with quote from Rabbi Hillel, “If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?” We will examine how this quote guides us to take care of our own communities and also reminds us of our unique Jewish responsibility for the whole world. As a class, we will participate in three excursions around New York City, to explore Jewish organizations that are committed to *briyut* – health and wellness, *tzedakah* and *gemilut chasadim* – justice and acts of kindness, and *tikkun olam* – repairing the world.

During the seventh-grade year, we will focus on the following goals and ideas:

- As Jews, we have an obligation to ourselves, our community, and the world.
- We need to know and care for ourselves before we can fully embrace helping others or changing the world.
- Jewish thinkers and classical Jewish text offer wisdom and guidance for how to take care of ourselves, each other, and the world.
- Jewish ritual, structured time, and commandments/*mitzvot* offer concrete opportunities for taking care of ourselves, each other, and the world.

All middle school students will have an aspect of “choice” for one of their class periods. *Chug* classes are interesting and developmentally appropriate classes similar to social studies and that expose students to Jewish history, culture, and values. Every two years, the class units rotate through three or four of the seven themes: “*Middot: Values*,” “*Historia: History*” “*Yisrael: Israel*” “*Makom: Place*,” “*Am: Peoplehood*,” and “*Torah: Texts*.” These intersectional topics each highlight a way of relating to Jewish education. The overall goal of the theme is made clear through a community wide program that will introduce the unit. This Chug program encourages sixth and seventh grade students to mix in learning communities, and invites students to engage with compelling Jewish role models on the teaching team, which will include guest educators and members of the Stephen Wise clergy.

At Stephen Wise Free Synagogue’s Religious School, we want students to see Hebrew as a living language of the Jewish people and to be able to use it confidently in prayer and in Jewish life. We work to ensure that every child is capable of decoding (reading without full comprehension) Hebrew prayers and blessings in preparation for leading the Shabbat morning service during their b’nai mitzvah. Upon mastering prayer requirements, students are invited to take a modern conversational a cultural Hebrew class.