


Barry Ira Graff School for Living Judaism 2025-26

OUR curriculum



Our Mission: To inspire and educate the next generation of Jewish leaders through meaningful learning, fostering a strong Jewish identity and connection to traditions, and ensuring a lifelong connection to their heritage.

Strategic Goals

Chagim: Holidays & Shabbat — Jewish holidays and Shabbat are the heartbeats of Jewish life. Through hands-on experiences, engaging stories, and meaningful traditions, students will explore the significance, history, and rituals of each holiday, as well as the beauty of Shabbat.

Am Yisrael Chai: Israel's History & Culture — Israel is central to Jewish identity, past, present, and future. Students will explore Israel's ancient roots, modern history, and vibrant culture through interactive lessons, music, food, and stories. They will gain an understanding of Israel's people, innovations, geography, and significance to the global Jewish community, fostering a lifelong connection to the land and its people.

Tfillah: Prayers — Prayer is a key way we connect with God, community, and tradition. Students will learn the meaning, melodies, and structure of essential prayers, deepening their understanding of Jewish worship. Through active participation in services, they will become comfortable with synagogue prayer, explore personal spirituality, and recognize how prayer strengthens Jewish identity and communal bonds.

Torat Chaim: Living Jewish Texts — Jewish texts are more than words on a page—they are a guide for living a meaningful Jewish life. In this curriculum, students will explore foundational Jewish texts, through discussion, storytelling, and analysis. They will uncover timeless wisdom, ethical teachings, and the relevance of these texts in their daily lives, fostering a lifelong love of Jewish learning.

Derech Eretz: Living Our Jewish Values — Our core Jewish values guide is in how we live. Students will explore values like kindness (*chesed*), justice (*tzedek*), repairing the world (*tikkun olam*), and respect (*kavod*). Through discussions, role-playing, and mitzvah projects, students will learn how to apply these values in their daily lives, shaping them into compassionate and responsible members of the Jewish and global communities.



For any questions about the curriculum or our Religious School, please contact Myriam Rofrano, Interim Director of Religious School at 561.241.1484.

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Learning Experiences

Overarching learning goals come to life through meaningful learning experiences both inside and outside the classroom.

Community Celebrations — Build relationships within the Jewish community and experience how participation in communal celebrations—such as SLJ Opening Day, Mitzvah Day, and Chanukah Shows—brings Judaism to life.

Family Engagement — Participate in event like Grade Level Shabbatot that strengthen family connections, celebrate traditions, and bring Judaism into the home and everyday experiences.

Immersive Learning — Engage in immersive learning experiences, such as Mishpacha Moments and social action projects, to deepen understanding of Jewish values and apply them through meaningful, hands-on participation in community service and family prayer.

Youth Involvement — Build leadership skills, strengthen connections with peers, and develop a deeper sense of ownership and identity within the Jewish community.

Ivrit: Hebrew

Tfillah — Each week, our clergy will lead students in Hebrew prayers as a community. We practice following along, learning the melodies, understanding how to behave in the sanctuary, and getting to know the order of the service.

Foundational Hebrew Acquisition — Students in 3rd Grade develop foundational Hebrew skills by learning to decode individual Hebrew letters and vowels, and begin blending sounds to form words.

Gaining Hebrew Proficiency — Students in 4th-7th Grade build Hebrew reading fluency by advancing decoding skills in proficiency-based classes and practicing reading prayers with accuracy and confidence.

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CURRICULUM scope

Pre-K

Chagim: Holidays & Shabbat — Recognize, understand, and engage with major Jewish holidays & Shabbat.

Am Yisrael Chai: Israel's History & Culture — Understand that Israel is the home of the Jewish people and explore its diverse landscapes.

Tfillah: Prayers — Gain familiarity with foundational prayers through music.

Torat Chaim: Living Jewish Texts — Explore key Torah teachings, developing faith and trust in God.

Derech Eretz: Living Our Jewish Values — Discover the core values of acts of loving kindness, gratitude, perseverance, and respect.

Kindergarten

Chagim: Holidays & Shabbat — Experience the customs of major Jewish holidays and the Havdalah ritual.

Am Yisrael Chai: Israel's History & Culture — Understand that Israel is the home of the Jewish people and explore its diverse landscapes.

Tfillah: Prayers — Gain familiarity with foundational prayers through music.

Torat Chaim: Living Jewish Texts — Explore key Torah stories and identify the matriarch and patriarchs.

Derech Eretz: Living Our Jewish Values — Gain familiarity with the core values of acts of loving kindness, gratitude, perseverance, and respect.

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First Grade

Chagim: Holidays & Shabbat — Continue to explore the customs of major Jewish holidays and identify symbols of minor holidays including Tu B'Shevat and Purim.

Am Yisrael Chai: Israel's History & Culture — Learn and identify major cities in Israel and recognize symbols such as the Israeli flag and Israel's national anthem, *HaTikvah*.

Tfillah: Prayers — Locate and identify the key synagogue objects and the tools used for prayer, including the Ark, Ner Tamid, Kippot, Siddur, and Tallit.

Torat Chaim: Living Jewish Texts — Examine the physical parts of the Torah and name key figures from *Ketuvim* (writings).

Derech Eretz: Living Our Jewish Values — Discuss values of leading with a courageous heart, caring for the Earth, bravery, gratitude, and *Kehillah Kedosha* (holy community).

Second Grade

Chagim: Holidays & Shabbat — Relate Jewish holidays to the Jewish calendar and their connection to the land of Israel.

Am Yisrael Chai: Israel's History & Culture — Explore the Israeli holidays of Yom HaZikaron and Yom Ha'Atzmaut and their significance.

Tfillah: Prayers — Distinguish between the order of service for morning and evening prayers.

Torat Chaim: Living Jewish Texts — Review and understand the parts of the *Tanakh* (Torah, Prophets, and Writings). Learn the Prophets and describe their lessons.

Derech Eretz: Living Our Jewish Values — Examine ways to apply empathy, kindness, and respect into our daily lives.

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Third Grade

Chagim: Holidays & Shabbat — Explore the rituals, customs, and blessings associated with each Jewish holiday through Jewish values.

Am Yisrael Chai: Israel's History & Culture — Explore lesser-known Israeli cities and regions to understand their unique geography, culture, and significance in Israel.

Tfillah: Prayers — Understand the structure of T'fillah by identifying its key components and recognizing the flow of prayers within a service.

Torat Chaim: Living Jewish Texts — Study the first book of the Torah, *Genesis*, and its key stories, figures, and themes as an introduction to Torah study.

Derech Eretz: Living Our Jewish Values — Apply core Jewish values to the stories of *Genesis* by analyzing the lessons they teach.

Fourth Grade

Chagim: Holidays & Shabbat — Reflect on Jewish holidays by exploring their customs, questioning their significance, and connecting their meaning to personal spiritual and emotional experiences.

Am Yisrael Chai: Israel's History & Culture — Recognize influential Israeli historical figures and analyze their impact on Israel's development, culture, and global contributions.

Tfillah: Prayers — Analyze Hebrew prayers and identify their origins in the Torah, exploring their meaning and significance within Jewish tradition.

Torat Chaim: Living Jewish Texts — Recall the stories of *Genesis* and study *Exodus* and its key stories, figures, and themes as a continuation of Torah study.

Derech Eretz: Living Our Jewish Values — Assess the value of leadership by examining the contributions of various Israeli leaders and their impact on Israel and the Jewish people.

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Fifth Grade

Chagim: Holidays & Shabbat — Expand knowledge of Jewish holidays by deepening understanding of their customs and significance, while also being introduced to Yom HaShoah and its importance in Jewish history and remembrance.

Am Yisrael Chai: Israel's History & Culture — Examine Israeli culture through art, poetry, and food to understand how they reflect the history, diversity, and spirit of Israel.

Tfillah: Prayers — Understand the meaning and purpose of each prayer in the service while reflecting on and questioning one's personal relationship with God.

Torat Chaim: Living Jewish Texts — Review the key stories and themes of *Exodus* and *Genesis* and study the third book of Torah, *Leviticus*.

Derech Eretz: Living Our Jewish Values — Read and discuss the novel *Natan Sharansky: Freedom Fighter for Soviet Jews* analyzing the struggles of the Jewish people and their fight for freedom while reflecting on themes of resilience, identity, and human rights.

Sixth Grade

Chagim: Holidays & Shabbat — Compare how Jewish communities around the world celebrate holidays and engage with traditions, considering similarities and differences in customs, rituals, and cultural expressions.

Am Yisrael Chai: Israel's History & Culture — Investigate the origins of the modern State of Israel by interpreting its historical foundations and relating its biblical past to present-day Israel.

Tfillah: Prayers — Connect prayers to their B'nai Mitzvah journey by understanding their purpose and importance, while developing the confidence to lead prayers and participate in the service.

Torat Chaim: Living Jewish Texts — Review the central stories and themes of the first three books of the Torah, and examine the content of *Numbers* and *Deuteronomy*.

Derech Eretz: Living Our Jewish Values — Analyze how historical Jewish periods, such as the Holocaust, shaped the development of Jewish values and how these values, in turn, influenced Jewish communities and traditions over time.

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Seventh Grade

Chagim: Holidays & Shabbat — Describe their role in creating meaningful holiday experiences and demonstrate ways they can actively contribute to holiday celebrations.

Am Yisrael Chai: Israel's History & Culture — Analyze modern Israeli culture by examining expressions such as Eurovision, sports, and food, and interpret how these elements reflect the diversity and identity of Israel today.

Tfillah: Prayers — Guide younger students in prayer and prepare for their B'nai Mitzvah through modeling, mentoring, and active participation in the service.

Torat Chaim: Living Jewish Texts — Question and interpret the role of God in Judaism, encouraging deeper reflection on personal beliefs and the nature of religious faith.

Derech Eretz: Living Our Jewish Values — Investigate key historical moments in the Jewish Diaspora and what led to Jewish communities settling in various global locations, with a focus on North America.

Eighth - Twelfth Grade Electives

Our 8th-12th grade religious school electives offer teens a dynamic series of five-week immersive experiences designed to spark curiosity, foster connection, and deepen Jewish identity. Through big questions, thoughtful conversations, and engaging exploration of Jewish texts and media, students build meaningful relationships with one another while exploring what Judaism means to them in today's world.

Not Your Bubbies' Cooking — Connect to Jewish roots by exploring traditional recipes and their histories, understanding how food reflects culture, tradition, and identity.

Israel: It's Complicated — Examine the diverse and complex makeup of Israel's population and develop the knowledge and language to engage in thoughtful, balanced, and respectful conversations about Israel's challenges and realities.

Israeli Art — Explore Israeli culture through its art, poetry, and music, and create original works inspired by Israeli artists to express personal connections to Israel's diverse cultural landscape.

Women of Valor — Reflect on the qualities of a Woman of Valor by examining the verse "strength and dignity are her clothing" and apply these values to build confidence, resilience, and self-worth in facing the world.

What's My Story? — Investigate the Jewish tradition of journaling and storytelling by examining how personal and ancestral narratives shape identity, resilience, and history, and engage in reflective writing to deepen self-awareness, connection to tradition, and emotional well-being.