

# Religious School Curriculum

We use a combination of the CHAI curriculum and supplemental material in our Religious School classrooms at Congregation Beth Am. The CHAI Curriculum is the Union for Reform Judaism's national Jewish school curriculum guide. Each core level contains units on *Torah*, *Avodah* (prayer), and *G'milut Chasadim* (acts of loving kindness). The CHAI curriculum is designed so that student learning will go beyond the specific classroom activities and will reach a deeper enduring understanding, establishing the basis for later Jewish learning and living.

## PreK/K

- Holidays
- Jewish Values
- Jewish Stories

## 1<sup>st</sup> Grade

### **Chai Curriculum Level 1:**

Torah: I am part of the ongoing story of Torah and the Jewish people.

Avodah: My Jewish acts help me discover the beauty and order of sacred time and my place in the Jewish story.

G'milut Chasadim: I am a part of the ongoing story of the Jewish people when I perform acts of *g'milut chasadim*.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade

### **Torah Stories**

### **Chai Curriculum Level 2:**

Torah: The Torah teaches me how to be part of the Jewish people.

Avodah: Jewish stories, celebrations and rituals help me understand and express my relationship with God.

G'milut Chasadim: We make the world a better place by performing acts of *g'milut chasadim* in our everyday lives.

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

### **Judaism and the Environment**

### **Chai Curriculum Level 3:**

Torah: The laws and rules found in the Torah can help us to live a life filled with holy moments.

Avodah: Through *avodah* we can make our lives and the world more *kadosh* (holy).

G'milut Chasadim: Each individual act of *g'milut chasadim* can make the world more *kadosh* (holy).

## 4<sup>th</sup> Grade

### **Jewish Lifecycle**

#### **Chai Curriculum Level 4**

Torah: With the promise of a holy land (*Eretz Yisrael*), we as a holy people (*Am Yisrael*) have a responsibility to work towards becoming holy by observing the *brit* (covenant).

Avodah: *Keva* and *kavanah*, the fixed order of worship and the personal intention we bring to prayer, are complementary aspects of Jewish worship, combining to help us make sacred connections.

G'milut Chasadim: We have a responsibility to perform acts of *g'milut chasadim* for the people we encounter in our daily lives.

#### **5<sup>th</sup> Grade**

##### **Israel**

#### **Chai Curriculum Level 5:**

Torah: The prophets were focused on reminding the Jewish people how God wants us to live, and their messages are at the heart of Reform Judaism.

Avodah: The practice of prayer can help me grow through personal reflection, can increase my connection to the Jewish people, and can strengthen my relationship with God.

G'milut Chasadim: We are all part of *K'lal Yisrael* and have a responsibility to actively support and sustain the Jewish community through acts of *g'milut chasadim*.

#### **6<sup>th</sup> Grade**

##### **Mitzvah and Tikkun Olam Projects**

#### **Chai Curriculum Level 6:**

Torah: Studying Jewish texts allows us to explore our relationship with God and reflect on the ways God is continuously revealed to others and to ourselves.

Avodah: *Avodah* is the work we do, by exploring our personal and communal role in Revelation, to find sacred connections to God, community and self.

G'milut Chasadim: We can experience God in our world, in others and within ourselves by engaging in acts of *g'milut chasadim*.

#### **7<sup>th</sup> Grade**

##### **Jewish Values and Ethics—Becoming a Jewish Adult**

#### **Chai Curriculum Level 7:**

Torah: My life is reflected in and reflects Torah.

Avodah: The message and power of Jewish prayer can help me understand and define myself as an individual and as an authentic member of the Jewish community.

G'milut Chasadim: Our development as emerging Reform Jewish adults and authentic members of the Jewish community is closely linked to our ethical behavior (*middot*) and the performance of acts of *g'milut chasadim*.

## **HEBREW CURRICULUM**

### **Lower Grades**

Our PreK, K, and 1<sup>st</sup> grade students will be using a variety of materials as they are introduced to the alef-bet.

Our second graders will be using *Journeys through the Alef-Bet*. It introduces letters and vowels, introduces core vocabulary concepts, teaches students to blend single-letter vowel combinations, and shows the students Hebrew letters in the real world (especially in Israel).

Our third graders will be using *Tiyulim*. It continues the learning of the Alef-Bet, using real words for Hebrew sounding drills, and increasing vocabulary, while taking the students on a brief tour of Israel.

### **Upper Grades**

In the upper grades, we utilize levels, rather than grade divisions. We have found this to be very successful—students are able to move up as they advance, and it makes it easier for us to discover students who are having trouble and needed extra help.

Our Alef students will be using *Tiyulim* to get them up to speed and sight-reading with some degree of fluency. We will also use beginner texts as necessary for our students who have never studied Hebrew before.

Our Bet students will be using *Journeys Through the Siddur, Friday Evening*. . As they learn to read the prayers, they will be developing a generalized meaning of the prayers, exploring what these prayers mean to them, and extending their knowledge of how the Hebrew language works.

Our Gimmel students will be continuing in this vein with *Journeys Through the Siddur, Saturday Morning*.

Our Daled students will focus on the prayers of the Torah service. If they master these prayers, they will do some modern Hebrew as well.

Our seventh grade students will continue working together to prepare for their Bar/Bat Mitzvah.