

**WARM PLACE. COOL SHUL.  
SCHOOLS RULE.**



**ADATH ISRAEL RELIGIOUS SCHOOL  
CURRICULUM: GRADES ALEF-ZAYIN**

*Sherrie Rosenberg Klein  
Education Director*





The Curriculum Committee, made up of professional educators and dedicated parents, worked tirelessly to develop this curriculum. They all contributed at various times over the course of four years and in many different ways.

A big *Toddah Rabbah* (thank you) goes to;

Marcia Schulman, Chairperson  
Mitchell Rothman  
Naomi Benditt  
Elisa Abeloff  
Judy Brody  
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Rhonda Karp;

to teachers

Suzanne Nahamo  
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Callie Lowe  
Patti Sheckman  
Linda Herring-Hill;

to Sherrie Rosenberg Klein, Education Director

and to Rabbi Richard Fagan, ACAJE Consultant, who worked with the team and guided them on the right path.

## Elementary Department

**Grades: 3rd through 7th**

**Sundays: 9:00—12:30 PM**

**Wednesdays: 4:00—6:15**

The primary focus Elementary Department is to prepare the student to become a participating member of the synagogue and greater community. Synagogue skills and Hebrew reading skills are paramount in achieving this goal. Hebrew reading fluency can only be achieved by parental participation in listening to their child practice a few times per week for 10-15 minutes.

The cantor works with each grade to prepare the students for their class service. Additionally, the cantor teaches Torah trope to the fifth grade students.

Students are required to attend Junior Congregation 6—10 times per year. Junior Congregation allows the students to reinforce the prayers learned in the classroom by leading the congregation and participating in discussions.

To further supplement the curriculum, students participate in music and Israeli dancing. Each student builds on the classroom lessons through time in the Sklaroff Multi-media Center.

Parents are encouraged to join their children for family educational opportunities. Please mark your calendar!



## The Primary Department

**Grades: 1st and 2nd**

**Sundays: 9:00—12:30 PM**

To enhance the curriculum, all Primary Department students spend time with the music instructor where they learn the tunes for prayers, Hanukkah blessings and the Four Questions for Passover along with holiday songs and popular Israeli children's songs. They also participate in Israeli dance classes approximately four times per year.

Primary department families are encouraged to attend special Friday evening services including Friday Night Alive and the primary Department service.

During the calendar year there are several family educational opportunities. Please mark these dates in your calendar.

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All grades collect Tzedakah money at the beginning of class. Students participate in deciding how to allocate the class's monies to various charities and organizations.



## Adath Israel Religious School: A New Approach

There is a new energy and buzz circulating through our hallways and classrooms, and teachers and students together are creating an environment for learning that is dramatically changing the nature of the after-school religious school. This excitement stems from the recent introduction of an innovative new curriculum that completely alters the way our children are being taught throughout their years at Adath Israel.

We recently completed our participation in the NESS initiative (Nurturing Excellence in Synagogue Schools) created by the Auerbach Central Agency for Jewish Education (ACAJE). NESS is a four-year, whole-school, on-site program geared towards strengthening synagogue schools through professional development for teachers, leadership development for education directors and training in organizational development strategies for synagogue and school lay leaders.

As an outgrowth of our work with NESS, the Adath Israel Curriculum Committee has spent the last four years developing a curriculum that makes two important improvements to the way our children are being taught:

- Students engage regularly in high-order thinking, discussion and reasoning based on a standard, school-wide design
- Themes and lessons are integrated and coordinated so that each year builds on the work of the year before

The implementation of this new curriculum is a work in progress. The Committee recognizes the importance of assessment and evaluation as integral parts of curriculum implementation as well as to the development and training of teaching staff. Parent input will be sought as part of this full scope assessment process. Additionally, report cards are being redesigned to be aligned to the new curriculum, so our parents will be able to review tangible results and discuss progress with teachers and their children.

# Understanding By Design

## A Curricular Framework

Understand by Design (UBD) is a framework for curriculum building. Working backwards, the curriculum committee developed a list of desired outcomes for the graduates of the Adath Israel Religious School. This list included what the student should “know, feel, and do” for each of the strands of the curriculum;

Prayer/Hebrew  
Jewish Practice  
Torah/Bible and  
Israel.

Working from the “Know, Feel, Do” list, the committee identified the “Enduring Understandings” for each strand. The Enduring Understandings are the “big ideas” that will remain with the learner throughout time. They contain value that goes beyond the classroom and have the potential of engaging the students.

The Enduring Understanding is not grade related but remain constant through the strand. They answer the perennial student question “why do I have to study this?”

The next step was to develop “Essential Questions” for each grade level per strand. These questions have no single apparent answer but are meant to arouse the curiosity of the student by creating more questions. The Essential Question will cross subject line thus allowing for integration of the curriculum.

# Zayin Curriculum

<b>Curriculum Focus</b>	Holocaust, Tzedakah/Tikun Olam Weekday Amidah
<b>Thematic Area of the Curriculum</b>	Holocaust, Mitzvot
<b>Theme/General Big Idea</b>	Responsibility and Identity

	<b>Prayer</b>	<b>Jewish Practice</b>	<b>Torah</b>	<b>Israel</b>
<b>Essential Question</b>	How does prayer transform us?	What does God expect from us? How does Jewish Practice help us get there?	Can Torah make demands on us? Why/Why not?	How does Israel affect us and how do we affect Israel?
<b>What is Taught</b>	Haftara blessings  Weekday Amida: 13 Prayers of Petition  Aleinu  Birkat HaMazon	Holidays—God and Ethics Yom HaShoah Pesah Hagaddah  Tefillin  Tzedakah	Biblical references to ethics and ritual practice Torah/ Prophets—in relationship to B'nai Mitzvah Middot/Values Modern Midrash Making informed Jewish decisions	Israel within the Amida Israel and Zionism—post Holocaust Israel—our identity and our responsibility Israel’s contribution to the world
<b>Family Education</b>	World Wide Wrap  Pay it Forward	Yom HaShoah (trip or Kristallnacht program)		
<b>Mitzvah Project</b>	Pidyom Shevuyim: Redeeming Captives Social Justice	Mitzvah Mania		

## Vav Curriculum

<b>Curriculum Focus</b>	Life Cycle Shabbat Amida Mitzvot
<b>Thematic Area of the Curriculum</b>	Life Cycle
<b>Theme/General Big Idea</b>	Participation: Individual, Community and God

	<b>Prayer</b>	<b>Jewish Practice</b>	<b>Torah</b>	<b>Israel</b>
<b>Essential Question</b>	How does praying connect us to ourselves, our community and our God?	How does my participation in Jewish customs and ceremonies connect me to the Jewish people and God?	What is it about life cycle events that connect us to God and Torah?	How does turning towards Jerusalem strengthen our connections to our heritage?
<b>What is Taught</b>	Kaddish Shalem Hatzi Yatom Others Amida Avot Gevurot Kidusha Kedushat Hayom Retzei Modim Sim Shalom	Life Cycle Tallit Kashrut Holidays—Cultural connections to the Jewish People Tzedakah	Thematic Torah Survey Biblical lifecycle references: Marriage—a Wife for Isaac Brit—Abraham Burial - Cave of Mahpelah Tallit	Covenant and the Land Israel in Life Cycle events Cultural: Askenazi/ Sephardim  Current Events
<b>Family Education</b>	Putting God on the Guest List	Tallit Workshop Praying with Lior		
<b>Mitzvah Project</b>	Derekh Eretz	Hiddur P'nei Zakein: Respecting the elderly		

## Enduring Understandings

“Why do we have to study this?”

### Prayer/Hebrew

- Through prayer, we find spiritual connections to God, to our community, and to our inner selves.
- The skills of praying and knowledge of prayer are important because they enable us to pray comfortably, meaningfully and joyfully.
- The skill of reading Hebrew for prayer enables us to better understand the meaning of prayer.

### Jewish Practice

- Studying about Shabbat, the holidays, life cycle events and other Jewish practices enables us to actively participate and make informed choices about observance.
- Rituals and practice embody important Jewish values and ideas.
- Jewish identity is built on understanding and integration of these practices and values into our lives
- Ritual, mitzvot and practices connect us to God and to the Jewish community.

### Torah

- Torah is the source of Jewish belief, law and values; everything comes from it.
- Knowing the Torah service and showing respect for the Sefer Torah makes us comfortable with the service and connects us to our community, K'lal Yisrael and God.
- Lifelong torah study helps form and informs our Jewish identity.

### Israel

- Understanding the history and culture of the State of Israel gives us a sense of belonging and is a part of our Jewish identity.
- The existence of Israel is essential and it is our responsibility to support it.

## Hey Curriculum

<b>Curriculum Focus</b>	Israel Torah Service
<b>Thematic Area of the Curriculum</b>	Modern Israel / Medinat Yisrael Torah Service
<b>Theme/General Big Idea</b>	Am Yisrael / Klal Yisrael The Jewish people / community

	<b>Prayer</b>	<b>Jewish Practice</b>	<b>Torah</b>	<b>Israel</b>
<b>Essential Question</b>	How does prayer help our relationship to Am Yisrael/ Medinat Yisrael? Can prayer affect our relationship?	Do the holidays connect me to Eretz Yisrael (the Land of Israel)? How?	How does Torah establish Israel as an essential piece of our identity? What does Biblical Israel have to do with me?	Why is Israel important to us?
<b>What is Taught</b>	Ein Kamokha Vayehi Binsoah Shema/Ehad/ Gadlu Lekha Adonai Torah Blessings V'zot HaTorah Ashrei Y'halelu Mizmor L'David Etz Hayyim	Holidays and their relationship to Israel Yom Ha'atzmaut Yom Hazikaron Tu B'Shevat Lag B'Omer Shalosh regalim	Biblical references to Israel Early Prophets: Joshua Samson King David King Solomon - Temple Biblical roots of our connection to Israel	Modern State of Israel Current Events Geography 100+ years of Zionism Modern Key Figures Israeli Government
<b>Family Education</b>	Creative Writing Project		Unfurling the Torah	
<b>Mitzvah Project</b>		Klal Yisrael Jaffa Institute		



## Dalet Curriculum

<b>Curriculum Focus</b>	Torah Survey Shema and Its Blessings
<b>Thematic Area of the Curriculum</b>	Torah Study
<b>Theme/General Big Idea</b>	Self / Values

	Prayer	Jewish Practice	Torah	Israel
<b>Essential Question</b>	How does ordinary time become holy time?	Does each holiday inspire my actions when it is not that holiday? How?	How does Torah make us holy?	What does Biblical Israel have to do with me?
<b>What is Taught</b>	Havdallah Service Shema/ Blessings Barhu/ Et Hakol El Adon Ohr Hadash Shema V'ahavta - Vayomer Mi Hamokha	Hebrew names of the months Holidays in the Bible their values Connection to us today	Torah survey Biblical basis for holidays Mitvot connected to parshiot	Biblical routes of our connection to Israel  Shalosh Regalim—the Pilgrimage Holidays and their connection to the land
<b>Family Education</b>	The Havdallah Workshop	The Havdallah Workshop		
<b>Mitzvah Project</b>	Ahavat HaBriyot: Loving one another/ respecting all			

## Alef Curriculum

<b>Curriculum Focus</b>	Jewish Calendar - Holidays Brachot
<b>Thematic Area of the Curriculum</b>	Jewish Calendar - Holidays
<b>Theme/General Big Idea</b>	Self

	Prayer	Jewish Practice	Torah	Israel
<b>Essential Question</b>	Why do I talk to God?  Sorry, Gimme, Thanks, Help	Why do I celebrate Jewish holidays?	What is Torah?	Why is Israel important to me?
<b>What is Taught</b>	Modeh Ani Barchu Shema La'asok B'divrei Torah Blessings: Foods - Motzei Etz Shehakol Gefen Adama Mizonot Amen	Tzedakah Holidays: Symbols Basic Prayers Home Observance Derekh Eretz Menschlekeit	Bible Stories	Israel integrated in Yom Ha'atzmaut
<b>Family Education</b>		Passover Adventure		
<b>Mitzvah Project</b>	Ha'akhlal Re'evim: Feeding the Hungry—Food Collection	Project Share		

## Bet Curriculum

<b>Curriculum Focus</b>	The Synagogue My Jewish Home B'rachot
<b>Thematic Area of the Curriculum</b>	Synagogue My Jewish Home
<b>Theme/General Big Idea</b>	Home

	<b>Prayer</b>	<b>Jewish Practice</b>	<b>Torah</b>	<b>Israel</b>
<b>Essential Question</b>	Does anyone hear when I pray? When is God?	Why do I celebrate Jewish holidays?	Why do we read the Torah over and over again?	Why love Israel?
<b>What is Taught</b>	Ma Tovu Shema/ V'ahavta Ein Kaylohaynu Sheheheyanu Blessing formula/ mitzvot Nature Blessings Birkhot Hashaḥar	Tzedakah Holidays: Symbols Basic Prayers Home Observance Synagogue Observance	Bible Stories	Israel integrated in Yom Ha'atzmaut  Cultural: Foods Tree planting
<b>Family Education</b>		Mezuzzah Workshop		
<b>Mitzvah Project</b>	Bal Tashḥit: Do not destroy needlessly— Greening the Earth			

## Gimel Curriculum

<b>Curriculum Focus</b>	Shabbat and Holiday Survey God Kabbalat Shabbat/Ma'ariv
<b>Thematic Area of the Curriculum</b>	Shabbat Our Partnership with God
<b>Theme/General Big Idea</b>	Community

	<b>Prayer</b>	<b>Jewish Practice</b>	<b>Torah</b>	<b>Israel</b>
<b>Essential Question</b>	Why do we pray as a community? Should we pray as a community?	How does Shabbat “keep” us? How do the mitzvot change us?	Why is Torah “ours”?	How do we celebrate Israel?
<b>What is Taught</b>	Ma Tovu Kabbalat Shabbat Shalom Aleihem Lekha Dodi Mizmor Shir V'Shamru Barḥu Ahavat Olam V'ahavta Mi Hamokha Adon Olam	Shabbat - Home Customs Home Rituals  The Jewish Calendar Holidays Rituals Customs	Creation Torah stories that relate to Shabbat Abraham welcomes guests Manna—double portion Ten Commandments	Holidays as they connect to Israel Israeli symbols Israel in prayer
<b>Family Education</b>	Partners with God project	Shabbat Seder: Bringing Shabbat Home		
<b>Mitzvah Project</b>		Hakhnassat Orḥim: Welcoming Guests		