



5th Grade Judaic Studies Purpose Statement Beth Huppin, 5th Grade Teacher

The overriding goal in Yonim Jewish Studies is to solidify a love of Jewish learning and living, as well as Torah, T'fillah (prayer), and Hebrew skills. Torah, Holiday, and T'fillah study are all opportunities to discuss important issues and dilemmas in our modern lives. Students are leaders in the school in all areas of Jewish learning. Learning is values-driven, and includes opportunities to do hands-on mitzvot helping others both in and out of the SJCS community.

Weekly Torah portion (sidrah) and in-depth study of a particular portion of the Torah are the two major aspects to our Torah study in Yonim. The weekly sidrah study includes discussing the portion in class with a focus on one or more important verses that the students write about and, if possible, memorize. The in-depth study is done in Hebrew in a two-year cycle with 4th-grade. Torah study focuses on understanding the text in Hebrew, discussing in-depth meanings, and looking at commentaries, especially Rashi. Year one involves study of the beginning of the book of Sh'mot (Exodus), including the 10 plagues, up until the crossing of the Red Sea. Year two involves in-depth study of the 10 commandments, selections from Mishpatim, the Golden Calf, Kushite wife, Spies, Korach, the deaths of Miriam, Aaron and Moses, and selections from Balak. All Torah study focuses on Jewish values that can be derived from the stories. The students will understand that the purpose of Torah study is to help us learn to live our lives in meaningful and thoughtful ways.

The goals of Modern Hebrew in Yonim are increased comfort with understanding and speaking Hebrew, familiarity with and mastery of basic grammar principles, and improved writing ability. Various Hebrew texts are used, including many modern Hebrew songs. The range of abilities in Modern Hebrew usually is quite wide in any given Yonim class. Some students naturally are good at learning languages; others find language acquisition more difficult. Some students hear Hebrew at home; others do not. The goal is to move each child forward and for each child to, at a minimum, feel comfortable listening to simple Hebrew instructions and stories, and writing basic sentences. We expect all children will conclude their years at SJCS with a love of Hebrew as a modern language. We help students see the connections between Biblical and Modern Hebrew as a way of connecting to Judaism, to the Jewish people, and to both the people and the land of Israel.

In the students' final year at SJCS they are expected to be leaders for the school at holiday events and for T'fillot. Specific goals include fluency in leading t'fillot, and understanding of the basic structure and meaning of t'fillot. Regarding holidays and life-cycle events, we teach a knowledge of and ability to use appropriate brahot (blessings), knowledge of basic historical events tied to each holiday, knowledge of basic traditions and laws, and knowledge of the order of/seasons for each holiday. As leaders, the 5th-graders take special pride in their knowledge of t'fillot and holiday rituals.

Love of the land and people of Israel is a major goal of SJCS. Current events in Israel are discussed regularly, as they arise. Review of the basic geography and map of Israel is ongoing. Each spring, there is a two-year in-depth Israel study done

with 4th-grade. We study either major cities and historical sites, or major historical events and figures in Zionist history. Yonim students take a major role in leading our annual "Trip to Israel" in May.

A major focus of our year is social action and making a difference in this world. Letter writing and other hands-on projects are an important part of our work. Biblical and Rabbinic texts guide us in our work. We serve meals at Operation Sack Lunch on a monthly basis. As school leaders, we help with the school's hot-lunch program. Students from Yonim play crucial leadership roles in every all-school function. Being leaders, showing Dereh Eretz, and realizing that each student can play a unique and important role in Tikun Olam (fixing the world) are essential elements of the Yonim experience.