

From David Gronlund-Jacob:

Things are moving right along in the Hebrew School.

Our youngest students in the Kindergarten and 1st grade class are beginning to learn about what it means to be Jewish. So far, we have learned about Sukkot and being in a sukkah, we learned about how we greet Shabbat with candles, juice, and challah. We even learned a little about how we say goodbye to Shabbat and what a *Havdalah* service is about.

In our 2nd grade class we are learning about the Jewish year and all the holidays. Our favorite so far is Shabbat, because it comes around every week and we get to drink juice and eat challah! We are also learning about the Torah and the wonderful stories it contains. We are even making our own Torah scrolls with pictures.

The 3rd grade students are working their way through the 10 Commandments. These laws handed to Moses at Mount Sinai and passed down through the ages are the cornerstone of many contemporary legal charters. Our students are adding their voices to these long-standing words.

Rereading Torah stories with new eyes is part of the 4th grade curriculum. What does the story about Adam and Eve teach us about being alone? What can Noah teach us about being righteous? Why was welcoming guests so important to Abraham and Sarah?

The 5th graders are learning that our Jewish stories continue after the Torah. The rest of the Bible begins with the story of Joshua and Jericho and the Israelites actually make it into the land promised to them by God.

*Pirkei Avot* (the Sayings of our Ancestors) is the focus for our 6th grade Judaics program. This 2nd century text still holds meaning for us today. Our students are reading these ancient words and adding their own contemporary meanings. The links of Judaism are continuing in this class.

Our 7th grade students are continuing their quest through the 613 *mitzvot*. They are learning with the rabbi which ones we can or cannot do today. Here is a hint: Many *mitzvot* deal with sacrifices done during the time when the Temple in Jerusalem was standing, but many others are still relevant today.

In our High School program (8th, 9th, and 10th grades) we are learning how to debate important subjects including healthcare, monitoring online activities, minimum wage, and other current topics. In November, we broke from our regular curriculum and learned what the Torah teaches us about warfare, and about how we welcome guests. We put both of these Jewish concepts together and ended our class by making care packages for our soldiers overseas. I'm sure they will be well received.

In our *Siyyum* class, the 11th and 12th grade students are learning about how to make Jewish decisions. "Packing for College" curriculum discusses how do I use my time wisely, who are my real friends, and now that I am not living at home with my parents, how can I make the best choices?

As you can see we have a very rich and robust Judaics curriculum. Next time we'll learn more about what goes on in the Hebrew classes.