

NCRT Hebrew School Newsletter

Second/Third Grade News

Dear Second and Third Grade Parents,

I want to start off by saying how wonderful our 2/3 Shabbat service was!! Your children worked very hard, practiced their parts and songs, and really made everyone very proud. It was such a great feeling to see them read in front of the congregation, and I'm sure you all felt the same way.

The students have been continuing to learn Hebrew letters and how to read Hebrew words. We are about half way through with the Aleph-Bet now, and the students have really embraced the Hebrew curriculum and work very hard in class. We have been playing games, such as Hebrew Tic Tac Toe, in order to help learn how to read.

We have also been continuing with our Mensch curriculum. If you remember from previous newsletters, I wrote that we discussed that a "mensch" is not just a person but a *good* person. The students have really enjoyed talking about this subject. Each student made a chart of three good choices they made this year and three bad choices they made this year. We discussed them and discussed that everyone makes bad choices sometimes. We talked about finding ways to stop ourselves from making those wrong choices. We also talked about "taking action." We decided that it is better to start small. For example, when it comes to giving Tzedakah, we know that as children they cannot feed all the hungry people in the world. But, by starting small, the children can make Tzedakah boxes on their own, give a few coins a week to Tzedakah, etc.

This month, we will begin to discuss Purim! Looking forward to seeing everyone at the Carnival!

Arielle Hudesman

Fourth Grade News

Dear Parents,

Upon returning to school in January, our class set out to finish mastering the *Maariv* prayer. The enthusiasm they showed in December, was not lost during the time off. This is a determined group. They work tirelessly in class, and practice diligently at home.

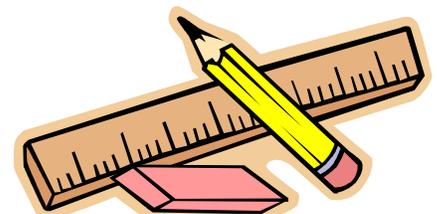
While a snow day, special programming, and absences due to illness set us back a bit, we rolled into February ready for "prime time." That is, the children were now capable of leading the *Maariv* at the Tuesday Learners Service! I gave the good news to Rabbi Liss. When our five dynamos were called up to lead the prayer, there were big smiles all around. Needless to say, they performed flawlessly. I was so proud of them!

As a reward for all their hard work, the day before February Break, we had a "*Maariv* ice-cream party." There were three flavors of ice cream, and several toppings. A good time was had by all.

Also, just before the vacation, we began our next prayer, the *V'ahavta*. *V'ahavta* commands us to love God, and shows us the many ways to do this. It is a prayer included in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service. This prayer is more of a challenge for the children, as they not only have to learn to read it, but also chant it. We hope to have the entire prayer completed in time for the **4th Grade dinner and service, which is Friday, April 4th.**

Please be sure to join us then.

Linda Sibell



Fourth Continued

We are now learning about the State of Israel, its history and how it came to be a state. . We are also learning about the countries that surround Israel. We have been working with the map and finding places they are learning about. Did you know that Israel is the size of New Jersey? They all wrote prayers/wishes that brought to Israel on our trip in February. We squeezed them into the crevices of the Kotel, the Western Wall of the Temple that was destroyed. Your children are really having fun learning about all the places, the different people, religions, etc. Get ready, they will want to go someday. (Birthright when they are 18).

Sunday music with Student Cantor Levy as always is fun. They are and learning and leading some of the practice Shabbat services with Rabbi Liss. They are energetic and love to participate.

*Please remember that bringing them to any Shabbat services even, if for only 15 minutes helps them feel your support & become more confident in what they are learn in class. The 1st 2 Fridays of the month are at 6pm for 1/2 hour of nosh/appetizers. Then a brief service 6:30 - 7:30pm, were you are welcome to come as you are. Just come. ;-). The others start at 7:30p have an oneg/desserts after. They love getting the stickers on the board in the school hallway for coming.

As parents you have a lot to be proud of in your children. I know I am. Please remember to contact me should your child not be coming to school or if there is something I should be aware with them. I want to be sensitive to their needs.

I can be reached on cell-516-967-6275, texting is fine or at email me at Grace.Blank@ColdwellBankerMoves.com

Spring is coming soon!

Warm regards, Grace

Fifth Grade News

Dear Fifth Grade Parents:

This past month we celebrated the holiday of Tu B'Shevat which commemorates the rebirth of the trees as the sap begins to flow and the trees begin to bud in Israel marking the coming of Spring. In keeping with the topic of trees and nature, the children made Mezuzahs of wood that were decorated with leaves and flowers and I hope you posted them on one of your doors.

In their Hebrew studies, the children continue to learn more of the daily prayers including: the "The Shema" and "Mi chamocha ". Now we are learning about the upcoming Holiday of Purim and the children are excited to be a part of it. Each Sunday the children have been learning about the Torah portion of the week and they act out the various roles of each story.

In addition, the children are using the book "Jewish life Cycles" and have been learning the importance of family, Bar and Bat Mitzvah and confirmation.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions and thank you for your generous Chanukah gift.

Shalom,

Dalia Brody



Sixth Grade News

Dear Parents,

We began January prepping for the 6th Grade service. This proved to be an interesting process. When special programming reduced our practice time, the children took it upon themselves to re-organize parts for the service. They put aside their preferences for one prayer over another, deciding instead to go where their Hebraic strengths would most benefit the service. There was much switching of parts, with no disagreements. The leadership and maturity I witnessed, was most impressive.

The service itself, was a great success, and yet another example of the specialness of this class. With two classmates suddenly ill and unable to participate, volunteers took up their parts, performing flawlessly. Your children read and chanted throughout the service, with great enthusiasm and expertise.

January also found us delving into the Haftarah blessings, beginning with the blessing before the Haftarah. Haftarah is chanted after completing the Torah portion, and is a selection from the writings of the Prophets. The Haftarah's teachings can deepen and enrich our understanding of the Torah portion.

In the Haftarah blessings, we praise God for giving us the prophets of truth, the Torah, worship and Shabbat.

Our Hebrew text revealed that in Jerusalem, there is a street called Ha-Neviim, or Prophet Street. We also learned that signs in Israel are printed in Hebrew, Arabic and English.

As we left for the February break, everyone was able to chant the before blessing of the Haftarah. We will continue to review that blessing, as we spend March learning the after blessing.

B'Shalom,

Linda Sibell

Sixth Grade Continued

Dear Parents,

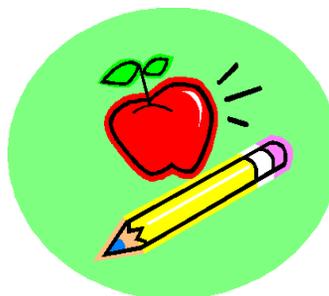
Our class has continued to learn and discuss about famous extraordinary Jewish leaders and the great contributions they have made. We have lively discussions about what their lives were like and their struggles. We have been reading and discussing an outstanding book; *The Ten Thousand Children of the Kindertransport*. It tells true stories and recollections along with family pictures written by the children themselves. Our students are engaged with questions and good discussions.

Your children understand more than ever how fortunate they are to be loved and supported by their family and friend and be able to come and go freely in America. Each week we share any Mitzvot we have done. I share mine as well. It has been a good trigger for discussion.

As always, I am very proud of them. I know you are as well.

Spring is almost here.

Warm regards, Grace



Seventh Grade News

Dear 7th Grade Parents,

We have been having a great time in our Sunday morning Judaic class! One of our favorite books to use is Judaism's Great Debates. In this book, we read about certain debates that people had in the Torah and discuss them. This month we focused on a great debate between Moses and Korach. Moses had led the Israelites into the desert and they had been wandering for a long time. A man named Korach decided to challenge Moses' spiritual and political leadership. He questioned why Moses was chosen to lead and not anyone else. Korach also questioned why Moses chose his brother Aaron and other family members as leaders. We discussed the concept for *elitism* and questioned whether or not there were any elements of elitism in Moses' choice to have Aaron and his family lead the people instead of other community people such as Korach. The students had their own great debates as to whether they believe certain positions of authority should be reserved and restricted for elite groups of people.

We also discussed what makes a great and effective leader. Because the Israelites rebelled a number of times against Moses in the desert, I asked the students if they believed that if Moses was a more effective leader, do they think that the Israelites would have continuously rebelled like they did? We decided as a class, that it probably would not have mattered who the leader was, the people would have rebelled no matter what.

It is so wonderful to have these discussions and hear their thoughts on such complex topics.

Arielle Hudesman

Seventh Grade Continued

Shalom 7th grade families!

Wow - hard to believe it's March already! Though we definitely missed a good deal of classes in January and February due to various holidays, our 7th graders have accomplished quite a lot since winter vacation. They had the opportunity to learn from a Torah scribe about the many details that go into writing and fixing a Torah scroll. As many of you know, we also had our tallit workshop, where many of them completed their gorgeous tallitot which they will wear for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebrations.

Speaking of B'nai Mitzvah, we have officially begun the B'nai Mitzvah season for our 7th grade class. Sam Rotberg became a Bar Mitzvah in Israel last month and Ariana Greenberg will be our first for the season here at the Temple in just a few weeks. I look forward to watching how this growing excitement inspires others to keep practicing their prayers and blessings.

As always, please continue to encourage your children to use the CD and packet at home to reinforce our learning in class! These 7th graders continue to impress me with their retention of Torah cantillation. We have worked in our prayer packets up to the Amidah. As we begin this familiar prayer, we will focus especially on correcting slight errors that may have forged their way into the ears and brains of your children, and I'm sure they will do splendidly.

As a heads up, Purim is just around the corner and I look forward to celebrating with you on 3/15 and 3/16!

B'shalom,

Student Cantor Lauren Levy



Seventh Grade Continued

Dear Parents,

February has been the shortest month of the school year because of president's week and school cancellation because of heavy snow. Nevertheless, we still managed to get in very productive in several weeks.

We are having great success in mastering many of the Shabbat prayers that are sung in Synagogue every week. We learned about Tu B'shevat which is Jewish Arbor Day celebrated all over the world, especially in Israel.

Your children were given and have written very important essays:

A-Why should Jewish children attend religious school?

B- How has attending North Country Reform Temple affected me in my personal life?

The quality of these essays were of a very high level and we are still discussing them as every student gets the opportunity read his/her personal essays. The value of this is tremendously important. I do hope you ask your child to show you their wonderful essays.

Mr. G

