



# Hebrew Language Curriculum

At the JCA the goal of our Hebrew curriculum is to offer students an exciting introduction to the Hebrew language and to actively engage students in their Hebrew studies. We want to teach our students basic Hebrew language, reading and prayer skills while also providing them with a living experience and meaningful connection to the Hebrew language.

## The Goals of our Hebrew Program

1. To provide students with a solid foundation in reading/decoding the Hebrew language.
2. To have students excited about and engaged in their Hebrew studies.
3. For students to see Hebrew as a living language.
4. For students to feel comfortable and able to participate in Jewish Prayer and Jewish life.

## Components of Our Hebrew Program

Our Hebrew curriculum includes four main components which work together to provide a complete program for our students as they move from our younger grades to our older grades.

**HEBREW THROUGH MOVEMENT** Students learn Hebrew by hearing and responding to Hebrew commands. Hebrew through Movement introduces language in a playful and meaningful way, creating a positive link between children and Hebrew language. The Hebrew through Movement curriculum starts by laying a foundation of modern, spoken Hebrew, and it builds toward the goal of making our prayers, Jewish vocabulary and Hebrew decoding more accessible to students. The Hebrew through Movement program is supported by the latest brain research on learning, providing an aural foundation for Hebrew that opens the door to Hebrew reading and decoding.

**JEWISH LIFE VOCABULARY** One important way that American Jews connect to the Hebrew language is through key Hebrew words and phrases (such as *shalom*, *mazel tov*, *tikkun olam*, and more). By learning, using, and exploring Hebrew terms, our students will experience the world through Jewish values as they develop a greater connection to and understanding for the Hebrew language. Weekly vocabulary words will be integrated into classroom teaching for students in every grade level.

**OUR TEFILLAH (PRAYER) PROGRAM** An opportunity for building community, making meaning and learning prayers. *Tefillah* is one of the ways in which Jews celebrate Shabbat and holidays, connect with the larger Jewish world, and take part in synagogue life. We believe the best way to learn *tefillah* is to participate in *tefillah*. By holding religious school classes on Shabbat, and integrating a Shabbat prayer services into our weekly program, students will learn the basic skills of worship, including reading Hebrew prayers, understanding Hebrew words, practicing choreography and becoming familiar with the organization of the prayer service. Our *Tefillah* Program is led by musician and educator, Felicia Slein, and is enhanced by the addition of music, discussion and stories. Parents are strongly encouraged to join in, and learn along with their students.

**OUR HEBREW DECODING PROGRAM** In general, our approach to Hebrew reading is based around a belief in delayed decoding. That is, waiting until the 6th grade year for students to begin learning to decode (read) the Hebrew letters and words. This ensures that students have a solid base of auditory Hebrew exposure through T'fillah, Jewish Life vocabulary, and Hebrew Through Movement. Something on which to build their reading skills. At the beginning of 6th grade, the Director of Communal Life and Learning will meet with each family individually to determine the best way for their student to learn to decode Hebrew. We offer a variety of approaches to meet the needs of all our families, from individual tutoring, to group lessons.

In keeping with our individualized approach, we recognize that some children and families are ready to learn decoding much earlier than 6th grade. If this is the case for your family, please contact the Director of Communal Life and Learning to discuss having your student learn to decode earlier than 6th grade.