



Sinai Temple Religious School Family Handbook

2009–2010
5769–5770

Sinai Temple Religious School
3104 West Windsor Road
Champaign, IL 61822

217-352-8654

Approved by the Education Committee August 2009

Table of Contents

OUR MISSION & GOALS	5
OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES	5
OUR PROGRAM: RELIGIOUS SCHOOL	6
HAND-IN-HAND: AGES 2-3	6
GRADE SCHOOL: PREK/KINDERGARTEN THROUGH SEVENTH GRADE	6
HEBREW HIGH: EIGHTH & NINTH GRADE	6
CONFIRMATION: TENTH GRADE	7
OUR PROGRAM: HEBREW SCHOOL	7
POLICIES & PROCEDURES	8
ADMINISTRATION	8
<i>Communication</i>	8
<i>Lost and Found</i>	9
<i>School Closures</i>	9
ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL	9
<i>Attendance</i>	9
<i>Arrival</i>	9
<i>Dismissal</i>	9
CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS	10
<i>Books & Materials</i>	10
<i>Cell Phones</i>	10
<i>Discipline</i>	10
<i>Homework</i>	10
<i>Snack Policy</i>	11
<i>Tzedakah</i>	11
RELIGIOUS SERVICES	11
<i>Consecration</i>	11
<i>Confirmation</i>	11
<i>Family Service</i>	12
<i>Service Requirements</i>	12
TUITION AND FEES	12
VOLUNTEERS	13
<i>Committees</i>	13
<i>Family Shabbat Coordinators</i>	13

Room Representatives 14
Sinai Café..... 14
Student Volunteers 14
CURRICULUM14

OUR MISSION & GOALS

The mission of Sinai Temple Religious School is to provide a positive, stimulating, and creative learning environment which facilitates the development of active and enthusiastic Jewish youth. This is achieved through providing an excellent learning environment, materials, and faculty, as well as an atmosphere conducive to life-long Jewish learning.



The goal is to foster a strong and positive Jewish identity and commitment to living a Jewish life. Our hope is that students develop a strong sense of what it means to be Jewish and to have a strong commitment to Judaism and Jewish life that carries through to adult life.

We teach our young people the importance of God and Torah. Students are instructed on and exposed to Jewish religious practice and prayers, Jewish holidays and customs, Jewish history, and the Hebrew language. We aim to foster a commitment to Israel and social responsibility.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

There is no more important obligation of a Jewish community than the education of its children. The Jewish education of a child often begins in a religious school, and is reinforced in the synagogue, at home, and in the community at large. For many young families, the decision to become active in the local Jewish community is often driven by the impulse to provide children with a Jewish education. This process brings families closer to the synagogue and enriches the whole Jewish community. The children, in particular, are the most immediate beneficiaries, for the child who attends religious school, who attends synagogue with their parents, and who participates in synagogue activities, both with their peers and with their parents will integrate their religious school instruction into their lives and grow as committed Jews.

It is for these reasons that Religious School families are strongly encouraged to become members of Sinai Temple. Membership reflects the above belief that learning about Judaism includes not only Jewish education, but also participation and involvement in Jewish life. The Religious School is open to both Temple members and non-members, however, Temple membership is required to participate in life cycle events including, but not limited to, Consecration, Bar/Bat Mitzvah, and Confirmation. Non-member families with children enrolled in the Religious School, in accordance with Temple policy, will be assessed tuition plus a surcharge equal to the cost of Temple membership. Thus, all families with children enrolled in the Religious School will bear an equivalent financial burden.

No child/family will be turned away for financial reasons. If a family is unable to pay dues, tuition, or the non-member surcharge, special arrangements can be made with the Temple Vice President to fit the financial needs of the family.

OUR PROGRAM: RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Hand-in-Hand: Ages 2-3

Sunday 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

- ★ This class meets weekly. It is a joint parent/student program where students participate in crafts, story time, songs, and other activities associated with the Jewish holidays, traditions, and Biblical stories.
- ★ This program is open to all members of the Jewish Community of East Central Illinois. Temple membership is not required.

Grade School: PreK/Kindergarten through Seventh Grade

Sunday 10:00 am – 12:30 pm

- ★ Students meet weekly in their individual classrooms.
- ★ Students have classes with an art, music and library specialist regularly.
- ★ Individual curriculum is designed on the following curriculum strands: Bible & History, Prayer & God, Israel, and Holidays. Themes by grade level are included at the end of this handbook.
- ★ Students are expected to participate in grade level Family Shabbats, where they learn and lead different parts of a Friday night service.

Hebrew High: Eighth & Ninth Grade

Sunday 10:00 am – 12:30 pm

- ★ The first hour students will participate in elective courses. Multiple electives are offered during the year on a trimester schedule. Students will prioritize their choices at the beginning of the year and will be assigned as space allows. Electives are open to all students in grades eight to twelve.
- ★ Students will meet with a grade level teacher from 11:00 am – 12:30 pm. The curriculum includes Jewish history, theology, and Jewish identity.
- ★ Students may participate in *Tikkun Olam, repairing the world*, projects as every adult Jew is encouraged to do. Opportunities will be made available to participate in community service projects.

Confirmation: Tenth Grade

Sunday 10:30 pm – 12:00 pm

- ★ The goal of Confirmation is for 10th grade students to realize their personal connection to their Judaism, consider and understand the need for a commitment to Israel, explore their personal understanding of the Holocaust and how it has impacted their identity, and to examine current events in the light of Jewish thought so as to have a life-long connection to Judaism.
- ★ Confirmation is the “final” year of Religious School, and concludes with a “graduation” ceremony.
- ★ Students will be responsible for reading outside of the classroom. Books may include *The Narrow Bridge* by Rabbi Isaac Neuman and *The Case for Israel* by Alan Dershowitz. Copies will be made available to the students.
- ★ Every year the confirmation students spend a weekend with the Rabbi experiencing Jewish Chicago. The trip includes a visit to the Spertus and Holocaust museum, a tour of a mikvah, and a variety of services at synagogues of different movements.
- ★ Students are expected to write summaries/essays of the books read, as well as a review of the Chicago trip experience. This will be published in a Confirmation booklet.
- ★ Participants are expected to take part in Sinai Temple’s Yom HaShoah service.
- ★ The Confirmation class will lead the Erev Shavuot service as part of their graduation ceremony. There will be several rehearsals in advance. Students will read Torah and lead the congregation in prayers. Students will share their reflections on the Ten Commandments at this service.

OUR PROGRAM: HEBREW SCHOOL

Sunday 9:00 am – 9:50 am

*Wednesday 4:30 pm – 5:45 pm (Alef, Gimmel, Dalet)
6:00 pm – 7:15 pm (Bet, B’nai Mitzvah)*

- ★ We offer an Alef, Bet, Gimmel, Dalet, and B’nai Mitzvah class.
- ★ Students begin Hebrew School during their third grade year in the introduction class, Alef. The focus of this class is to recognize each of the Hebrew letters, know their sounds, know the vowels and develop mechanical (decoding) reading skills. Students will learn Hebrew vocabulary as it relates to Judaism, prayers, objects in a classroom, parts of the body and ordinal numbers. They will also begin writing using the script alphabet.

- ★ Bet through B'nai Mitzvah focuses on learning Hebrew through the study of prayer. One goal is to make students feel comfortable in any service. Students learn the prayers, their tunes or melodies, their meanings and history, and midrash or stories about the prayers. They will examine the structure of an evening and morning service to understand how the prayers fit together to form a service. Students will also continue to expand their Hebrew vocabularies, reading fluency skills, and comprehension. Students will be evaluated regularly to assess their progress and determine their advancement.
- ★ Bar & Bat Mitzvah Students:
 - ★ Students must attend both Religious and Hebrew School in order to have a Bar or Bat Mitzvah at Sinai Temple.
 - ★ Students are expected to begin Hebrew School in the Alef class and continue through to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah class. Students must be able to demonstrate an ability to read Hebrew and follow along in the prayer book. Exceptions must be approved by the rabbi.
 - ★ About six months prior to a student's Bar or Bat Mitzvah date, students will be set up by the Educator with a private tutor to work on the Torah and Haftorah portion for the service. Individual tutors may also assist with specific prayers or other items that need attention prior to the service.
 - ★ A complete list of B'nai Mitzvah policies and education requirements can be found in the *Sinai Temple Bar & Bat Mitzvah Parent Guide 2009*.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

ADMINISTRATION

Communication

Administration – You may contact the Religious School office at 217-352-8654. You may also reach our staff via e-mail as follows:

Stephanie Pregent, Education Director

educator@sinaitemplecu.org

Progress Reports – Progress reports will be sent home twice during the year. The first will be mailed toward the end of December. The second will be mailed during May. Students will not be “graded” but their participation, enthusiasm, and accomplishments will be reviewed.

Teachers and Staff - Each teacher will provide a letter to the parents at the start of the year which includes their contact information. Teachers may provide an e-mail address or phone number, or they may prefer to have messages left at the office. Please respect each teacher's request.

Weekly Newsletter – The school newsletter is published weekly and sent electronically to the parents. This includes a column of updated upcoming events as well as information on ongoing projects.

Lost and Found

There is a Lost and Found bin located at the west entrance. Should a child leave anything that is labeled, best efforts will be made to call and notify parents. If there are no identifying marks, items will be left in the Lost and Found bin. After a couple of months, items will be donated to a local shelter.

School Closures

The Rabbi and Education Director will decide when Hebrew and/or Religious School will be cancelled due to inclement weather. If a decision to close the school has been made, a message will be left on the Religious School answering machine at least 45 minutes prior to the start of school. The following TV, radio stations, and internet sites will be notified:

TV: WILL, WCIA, WICD

Radio: WILL AM & FM, WDWS

Internet: www.cancellations.com

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

Attendance

Students are expected to attend each class on a weekly basis. If a student will be absent, parents are asked to notify the teacher or Religious School office in advance. Students are expected to be in their class five minutes before the start of class. Frequent absences detract from the student's learning opportunity. It can also be disruptive to the other students. If you know, in advance, of a scheduling conflict, please contact the administration so arrangements can be made.

Arrival

Students are expected to be in their classrooms at least five minutes prior to the start of class. If a student is running late, he or she should go directly to the classroom and enter the class with as minimal disruption as possible. Should a student arrive more than fifteen minutes before class, parents or carpoolers are responsible for their supervision.

Dismissal

Parents and carpoolers may pick up students from their classrooms immediately after class. Teachers will bring and supervise students in the west entrance lobby approximately five minutes after class. Should students not be picked up within fifteen minutes after class, they will be brought to the Teacher Resource Room or Educator's Office. If a parent/carpooler is running late, please notify the office so that supervision can be arranged. Students are expected to remain supervised in

the building. Teachers will supervise the students until the parent arrives, after which, the parent assumes the supervisory role.

At no time during school sessions are students to leave Temple grounds without written parent approval. Students will be dismissed only to a responsible adult. They will not be allowed to leave the building on their own to walk or bike home without prearranged permission from the Educator and parent.

Please notify the office or the classroom teacher in writing should a student need to be dismissed early.

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

Books & Materials

Tuition includes a books and materials fee for each class in which a student is enrolled. This fee covers the cost of basic supplies as well as textbooks, workbooks, project supplies, and other classroom materials. Students are not asked to bring notebooks, pencils or other supplies from home. If a student should lose a book or deface one such that it cannot be reused, s/he may be assessed a replacement fee. A family may request a copy of the text books to keep at home during the year. These should be returned by the last day of school.

Cell Phones

Students are discouraged from bringing cell phones to class. If a child must bring a phone, he/she must turn it off. If a child seems to be playing with the phone or it becomes a distraction, the teacher may take it until the end of class.

Discipline

The Religious School encourages the use of a positive, rewarding environment to encourage proper behavior. Children are expected to accept the consequences of their choices. It is the school's philosophy to teach children to be responsible, while preparing them to live in the real world, with its many choices and consequences.

If disruptive behavior is persistent, the teacher, along with the Education Director, will set up a meeting with the student and parent(s). Together, a resolution and action plan will be developed.

Homework

- ★ **Confirmation** – Students are expected to read The Narrow Bridge and The Case for Israel on their own time. Students are expected to write a series of essays and speeches in preparation for the Confirmation Service.
- ★ **Hebrew School** – Students in Hebrew School are expected to practice their Hebrew for at least an hour outside of the classroom for each hour they spend in the classroom. We firmly believe that Hebrew skills will be vastly improved by the additional time spent outside of the class. B'nai Mitzvah students are

expected to practice Hebrew at least 20 minutes a day in preparation for their Bar and Bat Mitzvahs.

- ★ **Religious School/Hebrew High** – Students are not expected to bring home assignments from their Sunday class. At times, a teacher may request that students work on a project with their family, participate in an activity that may deepen the understanding of concepts learned in class, or read a book that will assist in the learning process. If there are any conflicts, please discuss them with the classroom teacher and/or the office staff.

Snack Policy

Parents of Pre-K through Third graders are expected to sign-up to bring a weekly snack. Each family is responsible for bringing a Kosher, healthy snack for the class to share. Snack ideas include fresh fruit, nuts, granola bars and pretzels. High sugar foods are greatly discouraged. "Growing Foods," those that grow in a garden or orchard, are preferred.

Students in Fourth grade and up may bring their own individual snack with them. They, too, are encouraged to bring a healthy snack. Students may also choose to purchase a snack from the "Sinai Café." The café typically sells bagels, cream cheese, and crackers. The café also provides pizza slices for sale between 12:00 pm and 12:40 pm. All profits go to support the Religious School.

Tzedakah

As part of the goal to teach about social action, Tikkun Olam, and the need to help others, it is the school's practice to collect Tzedakah at the beginning of each Religious School class. Each student is encouraged to bring Tzedakah. Money will be collected throughout the year and given to a needy organization. Each class will discuss the meaning and importance of Tzedakah. There will also be a class Mitzvah Project to explore the many ways to participate in Tzedakah besides financial contributions.

RELIGIOUS SERVICES

Consecration

Students entering Pre-Kindergarten participate in a Consecration service. This service welcomes them into their formal Jewish education. Students receive their own small Torah and certificate commemorating this Life Cycle event. This service is usually scheduled during Sukkot. It may occur during the Sunday school or on a Friday evening during a Shabbat Rocks service.

Confirmation

Students in 10th grade participate in the "graduation" service, celebrating the completion of their formal high school Jewish education. This coming of age, Life Cycle event is celebrated on the evening of Shavuot with students reading from the Torah and sharing their insights on the Ten Commandments.

Family Service

Each grade from Pre-Kindergarten to Seventh Grade participates in a family service. Students in Pre-Kindergarten through second grade will participate in a Shabbat Rocks service on Friday evening beginning with a dinner at 5:30 pm and service at 6:30 pm in the sanctuary. This will be followed by an oneg in the Hand-in-Hand room. Students will learn about the service in advance and learn songs and prayers as they will participate and lead the service. Families are responsible for bringing food for the oneg immediately following the service.

Students in Third Grade through Seventh Grade will participate in a Friday night Shabbat service. The evening will begin with a potluck dinner at 6:00 pm. Services will begin at 7:30 pm. Students will practice different parts of the service with their Hebrew class, Religious School class and song leader. The goal of the Friday night Shabbat is to allow students to become comfortable and knowledgeable with the service both as preparation for their Bar or Bat Mitzvah and for lifelong enjoyment of synagogue participation.

Service Requirements

In support of the Hebrew program, the school promotes participation and attendance at Shabbat and holiday services. Each grade is required to attend a minimum number of services throughout the year.

Students may attend Friday evening services, Shabbat Rocks, the SNL (learners') minyan and other services provided at Sinai Temple or other Jewish institutions.

Requirements:

Aleph	5	Dalet	18
Bet	8	B'nai Mitzvah	21
Gimmel	12		

TUITION AND FEES

Hand-in-Hand (Ages 2-3 with parent/s or guardian)

Hand-in Hand (First Child)	\$230
Each Additional Child	\$200

Religious School (Pre-K-7th Grade, Hebrew High)

Religious School (First Child).....	\$285
Each Additional Child	\$255

Confirmation (First Child)	\$435
Each Additional Child	\$405
(Includes fee for Confirmation trip to Chicago)	

Hebrew School (Aleph-B'nai Mitzvah)

Hebrew School (First Child).....	\$285
Each Additional Child	\$255

B'nai Mitzvah Tutoring Fee.....\$693
(Includes prayer book, Torah/Haftorah portion book & tutoring)

Tuition includes a books & materials fee

Family Programming Fee.....\$100
(Assessed per family, not per child – used for holiday and other programming events for families in the Religious School)

Non-Member Surcharge.....\$1650

Tuition is billed in the fall and is expected to be paid in full by the first day of school. Payment schedules may be arranged allowing for tuition to be paid in monthly installments, on pre-determined dates, or other schedules. Financial assistance arrangements are handled by the Temple Vice President. No child will be denied a Jewish education for financial reasons.

Students in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah class may request a scholarship from the Paula Deckard Fund for B'nai Mitzvah tutoring. This fund was set up in honor of Paula Deckard, devoted wife, mother, and grandmother who strived to promote Jewish education and gave generously of her time and support to the Sinai Temple community.

VOLUNTEERS

Committees

Our parent volunteers are a vital and integral part of our success. Together, parents and staff are building a Jewish foundation for the students. This year, we have selected a committee chair for each of the major events. Each chairperson will be responsible for creating an active committee to accomplish its goals. Please feel free to contact either the Committee Chair or the Religious School Office to get involved!

This year's committees include:

Sukkot Sleepover
Camp Fair
Mitzvah Day

Purim Carnival
Teacher Recognition
Last Day BBQ & Assembly

Family Shabbat Coordinators

Beginning in Pre-Kindergarten, students and families are asked by grade to join the Temple for a Family Shabbat service. To best prepare for a successful and welcoming event, the Religious School asks a family or parent to volunteer to coordinate the event. The responsibilities are as follows:

- ✧ Notify parents by e-mail/phone reminding families of upcoming Family Shabbat.
- ✧ Coordinate dishes for the potluck so that there are two challot, main dishes,

side dishes, drinks, and dessert.

- ✧ Get parent volunteers to assist in clean-up before the service.

Room Representatives

Each Religious School grade is in need of a parent volunteer as the class room representative. This individual is responsible for assisting and coordinating different tasks as follows:

- ✧ Hand-in-Hand to Grade 3: Be sure there is a snack sign-up & that parents have volunteered for each week.
- ✧ Assist the teacher with parent notification of upcoming events.
- ✧ E-mail/call parents to help coordinate grade level holiday celebrations such as Hanukkah, Tu B'Shevat, and Passover.
- ✧ Begin parent e-mail/call to coordinate teacher gifts for Hanukkah and the end of the year.
- ✧ Assist teacher in coordinating parent volunteers for craft projects or other classroom activities.

Sinai Café

Sinai Café is another parent run group. Sinai Café sells bagels, cream cheese & other snack foods during Religious School. Around noon, the café sells pizza as well. Students and parents are welcome to purchase snacks and lunch. All proceeds go to support the Religious School.

Student Volunteers

The Religious School welcomes students in grades 10-12 to volunteer in the primary classes. Responsibilities include working with small groups, assisting with behavior management, assisting with administrative tasks including attendance and Tzedakah, and working on classroom projects.

CURRICULUM

The objective of the curriculum is to create a working program that will give teachers, students, and staff a foundation for Jewish knowledge in conjunction with the Mission Statement of Sinai Temple's Religious School. The curriculum has been divided into five different strands; Bible & History, Prayer & God, Israel, Hebrew (Pre-K-2nd) and Jewish Holidays. Included within those are the vital topics of Torah, Life Cycle, Jewish Values, Prayer, Traditions, Jewish History, and Jewish Law and Ethics. The curriculum is designed to teach from a pluralistic view point stressing the acceptance of all levels of observance and all movements within Judaism.

Hand-in-Hand

Hand-in-Hand is a parent-child interactive class. Activities will be designed for the two to three year old to have success with some assistance from his/her parent. Students will have projects themed around Jewish holidays, beginning Bible stories such as Creation and Noah's Ark, and Jewish concepts such as Tzedakah. There will be rotating themes as students may attend for two years as a "2" and "3" year old. The class will consist of circle time, music led by the Religious School music teacher, story time, art projects, and interactive play.

Pre-K/Kindergarten

The Pre-K/Kindergarten will focus on themes revolving around the family. They will learn about each of the Jewish holidays and read/listen to stories about family celebrations of the different holidays. The beginning of the year will look at Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Shmini Atzeret, Simchat Torah, and Chanukah. The second half of the year will look at Tu B'Shevat, Purim, Pesach, Yom HaAtzma'ut, Lag B'Omer, and Shavuot. They will also learn the names of the Hebrew months and when the different holidays occur. The students will also focus greatly on Shabbat. They will learn the blessings for the candles, Kiddush, and Motzei. They will create their own candlesticks, candles, Kiddush cup, and Challah board and cover. Students will each get to take home the class "Shabbat box" to use with their families and then bring back and share their experience with the class. The students will also learn many different Shabbat songs. Students will review the Alef-Bet song and will be exposed to each of the Hebrew letters, emphasizing recognition of the letters by name.

First Grade

The first grade will focus on Bible stories, Morning & Bedtime Rituals, Mitzvot, Holidays and Hebrew letter recognition. The students will learn basic Bible stories familiarizing them with Jacob, Joseph, and Moses. They will learn and experience basic Jewish rituals for waking and going to sleep. Students will learn the Shema and the importance of it to Judaism. Students will learn about basic mitzvot such as Tzedakah, Bikkur Cholim, and Derech Eretz. Students will also explore the major Jewish holidays as they occur throughout the year. There will be a special focus on the history and rituals associated with Passover and Shavuot. Students will also learn to recognize the Hebrew alphabet. They will both recognize the letters by sight and attempt to write some of the letters in print.

Second Grade

The second grade will focus on four main themes. The first theme is Bible stories. Students will learn several core Jewish stories, mainly from Genesis, as well as many from the Prophets. The class will also focus on Jewish values as seen and learned through these Jewish stories. The second theme is to become familiar with the synagogue. Students will learn about the main symbols and religious objects found in a typical sanctuary, the uses of a synagogue, the people who work there, and the history of Sinai Temple in Champaign/Urbana. The third theme for 2nd Grade is a review of the Hebrew Alphabet and the vowels. Students will have an opportunity to learn how to write the print form of the letters. Lastly, throughout the year, students will learn about the holidays as they occur.

Third Grade

The third grade will have four main topics of study. The first theme is Bible stories from Genesis, Exodus and Deuteronomy. Students will review several core Jewish stories beginning with Abraham and continuing through the Exodus to the receiving of the Ten Commandments. The second theme correlating with the Biblical stories is an understanding of each of the Ten Commandments. Students will learn and become familiar with each commandment, its meaning, interpretation, and implementation. The third theme is an understanding of the concept of God. Students will review their perceptions and investigate ways to find sacred connections to God. A final theme for the third graders is the study of Israel. Students will look at the geography and landscape of the country. Throughout the year, students will also have a review of each holiday as they occur.

Fourth Grade

In the fourth grade students will learn about stories of the prophets while also examining the Parsha of the week. The class will also do a comprehensive study of the mitzvah of Gemilut Chasadim. The students will look at a number of Jewish concepts/mitzvot such as Tikkun Olam, Bikkur Cholim, and Tzedakah. Students in fourth grade will spend much of their second semester examining the make-up and content of the Hagaddah. They will look at the meaning behind Passover, and gain a greater understanding for the rituals and traditions involved in the Passover seder. Students will continue to look at each of the Jewish holidays as they occur throughout the year.

Fifth Grade

The fifth grade will focus on three main themes. The first theme is the history of Jews in America. Students will learn about the roots of Judaism starting from Christopher Columbus and continue through modern American history. The class will focus on Jewish immigration throughout each century and how each of the students' families arrived in the United States. The second theme focuses on Jewish Life Cycle events. Students will learn and become familiar with Jewish traditions starting from birth, consecration, Bar/Bat Mitzvah, confirmation, marriage, and death. The third theme focuses on creating an understanding and relationship with God. Students will explore their own personal beliefs and look at several different philosophies of Judaism and how each defines and relates to God. Throughout the year, students will review and discuss each holidays as they occur.

SIXTH GRADE

The sixth grade will have two main themes. The first focus will be on Israel. Students will learn about the history of the modern state of Israel and the Israeli culture. They will learn about such figures as Theodore Herzl and the Zionist movement, the Balfour Declaration, the Camp David Accords and the Gulf War. Students will also become familiar with different parts of Israeli culture and society. They will learn about life in the big city, such as Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, as well as life on a Moshav or Kibbutz. While learning about the different lifestyles in Israel students will be exposed to modern conversational Hebrew. Students will learn many vocabulary words as it relates to shopping in an open market, making their way through a bus station, and hanging out on a beach. The second major theme for the sixth grade is the study of Reform

Judaism. Students will learn about the history, founders, and current philosophy of the Reform movement. They will also look at how the Reform movement has grown in Israel and what obstacles it faces there. Students will reflect on their own personal beliefs and family's beliefs toward Judaism. During the year, students will also review and celebrate the holidays as they occur. They may discuss topical current events as they happen.

Seventh Grade

The seventh graders will have several different themes in both History and Religious studies. Students will explore the history of the Jewish people beginning with the Patriarchs, but concentrating on the Roman Age through the 1800's. Students will look at many of the well-known and not-so-well-known historical figures that affected and drove the direction of Jewish history and learn different historical Hebrew songs. Students will also spend time examining the Holocaust through a look at individual experiences. They will focus on the timeline leading up to and during the Holocaust, with special attention to the build-up of anti-Semitism in Western Europe. Students will examine their own lives and how it may or may not have been affected by anti-Semitism. As students prepare for the Bar/Bat mitzvah, they will study the weekly parsha and learn how to read the literal definition, commentaries and midrashes. They will look at how to examine all of these and write a "drash." Students will also discuss the Jewish concept of Tzedakah and how they can incorporate that into their own BBM Tzedakah project. On the same theme, students will discuss Jewish ethics as it relates to current events.

Eighth Grade

Students in eighth grade will participate in both elective classes and a core class. There are two main focuses to the core class. The first focus will be on the history of the Modern State of Israel. Students will examine the movements that led up to the creation of the State of Israel, the development of the young country, and the country's struggle to exist in the Middle East. The second focus will be on how students personally define their being Jewish while trying to understand and accept the differences of a multitude of world religions. Students will be exposed to traditional monotheistic religions such as Islam and Christianity, while also looking at eastern religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, and Taoism.

Ninth Grade

Students in ninth grade will participate in both elective classes and a core class. There are two main focuses to the core class. The first focus will be on Jewish history beginning with the Middle Ages and the notable historical figures of the time period. This will include a look at Rashi, Maimonides, Shmuel Ha-Nagid, Yehudah Ha-Levi, and others. The class will examine the development of Jewish thought in both the Christian world as well as the Muslim world. Jewish history will continue from about 1000 CE through the 1600-1800's. The second focus of this class is Comparative Judaism. Students will look at the founders of the modern Jewish movements. They will also examine the philosophies, ideals, and practices of the movements today and how they differ from each student's practices and beliefs. Lastly, students will look at the challenges of being Jewish in Champaign/Urbana.

Confirmation

The Confirmation class is structured around the creation and development of a strong Jewish identity. This is achieved through examination of individual relationships with the State of Israel, a look into the State's history, and the reading of Alan Dershowitz's, *The Case for Israel*. Students will further develop their identity through the study of personal experiences of several individuals during the Holocaust, hearing a survivor's account, and reading Rabbi Neuman's, *The Narrow Bridge*. As this is the "graduation" of Religious School, students will examine a number of "hot topics" or current events and look at them through a Jewish lens. The hope is to prepare students for a life of continued Jewish learning, knowing where and how to seek out questions and answers.