

Kitah Vav (Grade 6)

Kitah Vav (Grade 6) meets twice a week on Sunday mornings from 9:00-11:30am, and either Wednesday or Thursday afternoon from 4:00-6:00pm. Our Kitah Vav learners are priming themselves for life as young adults, and we want to help them realize their potential for participation and leadership in the larger Jewish community. We understand that at this stage, learners are approaching the age of becoming Bar or Bat Mitzvah and our curriculum is planned to challenge them and to help guide them as they enter this exciting time of questioning, evaluating, figuring things out, and finding their place in the world.

Sixth graders practice the mitzvah of Bikkur Holim by visiting the residents of the Schaffer Extended Care Center in New Rochelle 3-4 times a year, on a Sunday morning. Our learners develop a relationship with individuals and the place in general, as they engage with residents in meaningful ways. Parents and families help out as drivers and chaperones for this amazing and successful program.

Sixth graders and their families participate in 3-4 family Sunday morning brunches that are dedicated to the process of becoming B'nai Mitzvah. The entire TIC 6th grade community comes together for learning created by and facilitated by educational staff and the clergy.

During the first semester, our sixth grade learners in Shorashim have the opportunity to learn with and from our rabbis. During this eight week unit of study, our learners engage in text and other study with the clergy on a variety of topics including middot/Jewish values. This learning happens on weekdays. The culminating event of the unit of study with the rabbis is a siyyum, during which families are invited in to celebrate the culmination of the learning.

Torah/Humash:

Kitah Vav continues to learn to navigate the Humash (how to find chapters and verses). The lens through which Kitah Vav learns Parashat HaShavua is through the actions and consequences of the characters. Connections are encouraged and geared to the way learners make decisions and live their own lives. Learners in Kitah Vav use the humash text and read in the original Hebrew with the aid of the translations. Learners are encouraged to read the text critically and to ask questions.

Hagim/Holidays:

Holiday learning includes a review of the stories and historical reasons for the holidays. An emphasis is also placed on learning different mitzvot associated with each holiday. Special emphasis is placed on learning key prayers for each holiday.

Shoah (Holocaust) Learning:

We begin to introduce the children to holocaust studies through the pedagogical lens of 'safely in, safely out' suggested by Yad VaShem. This subject is introduced through the use of a curriculum called, 'Circles'.

Circles is a teaching unit designed for middle school learners, focusing on topics that reflect Jewish observance during the Holocaust. The curriculum highlights Jewish religious traditions, rituals and holidays as well as places an emphasis on how Jews struggled to maintain their customs during the Holocaust. The following topics are covered: Tu B'Shvat, Chanukah, Purim, Passover Bar/Bat Mitzvah, Brit Milah, Prayer, Shabbat, Kaddish and Commemoration.

Israel Learning:

Israel learning in Kitah Vav is project based. Throughout the year, learners are encouraged to think about what questions they have about Israel, and what would they like to learn in particular. The educator guides the learners through the PBL (project-based learning) and at the end of the Israel unit, families are invited to see the final projects.

Hebrew:

The level of Hebrew knowledge varies somewhat among learners in Kitah Vav and the class is divided into Hebrew groups to facilitate smaller group learning. Some learners in Kitah Vav are more proficient Hebrew readers and work on increasing their fluency and comprehension, while others work on becoming more confident and fluid readers. The goal for all learners in Kitah Vav is to master the Aleph-Bet and vowels and gain fluency and fluidity reading basic syllables, small words, and phrases. The prayer focus of the Hebrew curriculum is the Torah service.

Prayer:

Kitah Vav participates in community tefillah on Sundays and weekdays and gains proficiency in those prayers. The learners in Kitah Vav take on a leadership role in leading tefillah. Sixth graders are 'buddied up' with younger learners to help them navigate the siddur; this also creates opportunities for the development of relationships across grade levels.

Kitah Vav Literacy Goals (by the end of the year our learners should know):

Humash Torah:

- Review and reinforce skills in navigating the humash
- What is the TaNaKh?
- Where the Torah falls historically
- The difference between pshat and derash
- If we don't believe in the Torah as historical fact, is it still important and valuable?

Hagim/Holidays:

- Review of the stories, basic practices, customs, traditions, mitzvot and brachot of each holiday
- Historical context of the holidays

Israel:

- Founders of modern Zionist thought (Hertzl, Ben Gurion, Meir)
- Government in Israel (democracy, Knesset)
- Challenges in Israeli society
- Why should we care about Israel?

Hebrew:

- Common roots
- Fluency and fluidity reading basic syllables, words and phrases
- Continue to develop a sight word vocabulary of words common to the siddur and biblical Hebrew
- Prefixes and suffixes

Brachot/Tefillot:

- Four Questions mastery, Hanukkah blessing mastery, food blessing mastery
- Continue to learn the prayers of the weekday morning service/prayers of the weekday afternoon and evening services during Community Tefillah
- Begin to master the Ashrei prayer
- Develop an understanding of the Torah service

Other:

- How to be a respectful member of a learning community
- How to navigate working in small groups or with a partner