

Gan (K)

Our Gan meets once a week on Sunday mornings from 9:00-11:30am. This is the first time that the child experiences the synagogue and school as a gathering place of children of all ages to meet on a regular basis to learn as a community. The Gan learner begins to develop a sense of Jewish identity and community through socialization among their fellow gan learners and the wider K-2 community.

Children in the Gan are introduced to select Bible stories that teach Jewish values and concepts, as well as the narrative itself. Hebrew language at this level involves calling children by their Hebrew or Jewish names when possible, and environmental Hebrew. Also included in Hebrew language is the introduction and use of key words of Jewish cultural and religious values.

Activities such as dramatic play, exploration of ideas through discussion and art, and singing and creative movement are introduced to reinforce stories and new ideas.

Holidays/Hagim:

The Gan focus is on an introduction to each holiday and some of the traditions and rituals inherent in each. Arts and Crafts activities are a part of the learning whenever possible.

Torah:

Gan learners explore select Bible stories and use the text "A Child's Garden of Torah". Materials are sent home for family discussion and interaction with each story they explore.

Text and Materials: "A Child's Garden of Torah" and take-home packets of Bible stories

Middot/Jewish Values:

This learning is a yearlong exploration of the ideas of tzedacka, prayer and gratitude.

Hebrew:

The introduction of Hebrew names and using Hebrew names is central. Educators use environmental (classroom) and content-appropriate Hebrew language.

Tefillah/Prayer:

Children participate in a weekly K-2 tefillah experience, during which they gather as a community learning to connect to God and to the prayers of our people. Through song, movement, exploration of the words of prayers in the siddur, children develop a positive and reflective attitude toward prayer.

Materials: Home-made siddur that learners reflect in all year and take home at the end of the year.

Israel Learning.

Israel is integrated throughout the curriculum when appropriate.

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

Torah:

- The Torah is special
- What a sefer Torah looks like
- Basic Torah stories
- Have familiarity with people in the Torah stories and what we can learn from them

Hagim/Holidays:

- Why do we celebrate each holiday?
- There are ritual objects connected to each holiday

Israel:

- Israel is the homeland of the Jewish people
- Israel is our 'second home'; what does that mean?

Hebrew:

- Hebrew names
- Hebrew classroom words
- Basic vocabulary

Other:

- How to be a respectful member of a learning community
- Tzedacka, derekh erez (being respectful), connection to prayer