

Stated Curricular Goals & Objectives – The Cheder @ AYSH

In formulating this curriculum, it was the primary goal of the Cheder that our students receive the most beneficial and rewarding Jewish education available. We want each of our students to graduate our program as educated, well-rounded, secure, and productive Jews, whether at home, at the workplace, or in the synagogue.

To this end, we have placed a significant amount of emphasis on achieving fluency in both the *kri'ah* (reading) and the *ktivah* (writing) of the Hebrew language. The foundation for these skills is laid in grades 1 and 2. During these years, our students are introduced to the names, shapes, and sounds of the letters in the Alef-Bet. They learn to enunciate and write each letter.

In Kitah Alef (3rd grade), our students learn the *nikud* (Hebrew vowels), which, together with their enunciation skills, allows them to effectively read and pronounce Hebrew words. Our ultimate goal for Kitah Alef is that each student achieves basic Hebrew fluency. At the same time, our students continue to sharpen their writing skills through the use of their workbooks and related materials.

As our students mature and develop, they work to sharpen their ability to read and write in Hebrew. Our hope is that by the end of Kitah Bet (4th grade), the students are reading fluently and writing with even greater skill. In subsequent years, these skills will be further honed through regular reading and writing activities.

In order to graduate students who are comfortable and functional in the synagogue, we have allocated significant time and energies to the reading and understanding of our *tefillot* (prayers). Included in this effort has been the formation of reading groups for Kitot Bet – Hey (grades 4 – 7), in which the students are placed in a group that is best suited for his/her current reading level. Students spend up to 45 minutes each day reciting the weekday *tefillot* and focusing on their meaning and message. On Thursdays, a special emphasis is placed on Shabbat *tefillot* and ritual.

Another component of our curriculum is the study of Torah (Bible). Studying Torah provides our students with a number of benefits, including the reinforcement of their reading abilities, and the inculcation of the basic morals and beliefs that are so central to Judaism. We study the Torah on two levels. First, all of our students review the

basic events and ideas of the weekly Torah portion (*parsha*). Key words and phrases from each *parsha* are identified and explained. Special focus is placed on the prominent personalities, places, and events that are described in each *parsha*.

In addition, beginning with Kitah Alef, our students are introduced to the study of *Chumash*. In this discipline, our students learn our sacred text in an involving and comprehensive manner. Verses are read, translated, and analyzed. Central themes are developed and discussed. The deeper meaning of the Torah comes to life for the students.

In the weeks that precede the *chagim* (Jewish holidays), our students spend a substantial amount of time learning their laws and observances. As the students advance through our program, a greater emphasis is placed on the deeper meaning and historical background and significance of each *chag*.

Studying the major personalities and events in Jewish History is yet another important aspect of our program. Beginning in 1st grade, our students are introduced our nation's rich and storied history. It is our belief that our collective sense of Jewish identity and Jewish pride comes largely from a deep awareness of our nation's past and the prominent figures that have laid the foundation for the growth and development of the Jewish People.

On Sundays, we integrate a music program into our schedule. Students in all grades learn songs that pertain to Shabbat, the *chagim*, or Jewish life. Students also learn songs that reinforce the material that they have learned in class in a fun and exciting manner.

We have endeavored to organize our program in a manner in which each year at the Cheder even more rewarding than the one that preceded it. We have endeavored to avoid repetition whenever possible and have aimed to ensure that the material from one year is reinforced and built upon in each subsequent year. We hope that this curriculum will help us reach our goal of producing graduates who are educated, well-rounded, secure, and productive Jews.