



תורה

A CSI Youth Publication

Central Park West at 70th Street, New York City • www.shearithisrael.org

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DEBAR TORAH

HANUKKAH IN THE HOUSE!

Hanukkah is a unique Jewish holiday. It's one of only two holidays not mandated by the Torah, but by the sages. The other such holiday is Purim, however, these two holidays are celebrated in very different ways. While on Purim people gather in synagogue to hear the reading of *Megillat Esther*, on Hanukkah people gather in their homes to light the Hanukkiah. This is surprising as Hanukkah celebrates the fight for religious autonomy in second century BCE Israel, as well as the rededication of the Temple, both of which were of communal importance. It's true that we make the holiday of Hanukkah communal by placing the Hanukkiah in our windows, but still, it's in our home windows.

The uprising won freedoms for the community at large (throwing off the yoke of the Syrian Greeks), but the revolt grew out of a family and their convictions. The rebellion was not led by well-known leaders (like Mordechai in the story of Purim) but by the Maccabees, an unimportant priestly family. The rebellion was ultimately of the people and for the people; it wasn't about the people following a charismatic leader. It was about the yearnings of ordinary Jewish people to live their lives in freedom and peace. Hanukkah is an important reminder that the strength and survival of the Jewish people are rooted in the Jewish home.

We'll See You THERE:

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16, 12:30 PM

Join CSI Youth for a Hanukkah party with fun activities for children of all ages including arts and crafts, candle decorating, card design, gift packaging, dreidel games, Hanukkiah lighting, gift grab-bags, and more.

Teen and parent volunteers needed.

RSVP to Alana Shultz at ashultz@shearithisrael.org

POP

Quiz:

How quickly can you match the books of the Torah with their Hebrew name?

בְּרַאשִׁית	Leviticus
שְׁמוֹת	Numbers
וַיִּקְרָא	Exodus
בְּמַדְבָּר	Deuteronomy
דְּבָרִים	Genesis



OUR TODDLERS

News from our Toddler Program and Bilingual Birdies

In our Toddler Program, with teachers Liz and Shanade, students began learning their primary colors through art projects dedicated to some of their favorite characters. They are also learning about Thanksgiving and Hanukkah through art projects that incorporate turkeys and the menorah as they prepare for eight wonderful days of holiday fun. Class is held on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. There is still room to sign up for next semester, starting in January.

In Bilingual Birdies, Morah Shirel is teaching our little ones music and Hebrew vocabulary. Children are learning about colors, seasons, emotions and more.

If you are interested in joining the Toddler Program or Bilingual Birdies, contact Alana at ashultz@shearithisrael.org.

SHABBAT PROGRAMMING

Shearith Israel is glad to have Rafi Blumenthal, Talia Kaufman, and Rena Rotter serve as this year's Shabbat group leaders.

Talia is our Tot Shabbat leader. Every Shabbat at 10:30 am she sings songs with our toddlers and teaches them about the meaning and practices of Shabbat and the parasha of the week.

Rena works with the girls and the younger children. Since the chaggim the girls have been learning Pirkei Avot and the weekly parsha. We play games relevant to the parsha, enjoy reading books and discussing hot topics like Hurricane Sandy or the importance of following rules.

Rafi works with the boys and is our Junior Congregation leader. He is currently in his second year of Teach for America, where he

teaches high school English in a public school in Brooklyn. The boys (ages 7-12) gather together for light Kiddush and parasha discussion questions. They then transition to a host of various activities, which strive to be simultaneously educational and entertaining.

In Junior Congregation, the youth of the synagogue (ages 5-12) gather together for an abridged, weekly prayer service. The children alternate leading different prayer portions, and it serves as a comfortable and welcoming environment for the children to learn and master different parts of the prayer service.

Shabbat groups begin at 10:00 am every Shabbat. Junior Congregation meets every Shabbat at 10:30 am in the Little Synagogue.

HEBREW SCHOOL

Checking in with our PTTs Principal and Teachers



Experiential learning includes trips to the sanctuary to see and learn about our Synagogue's historic artifacts.

Greeting from Rabbi Morris

It's remarkable and exciting to see how our school grows each year. With just 17 students a few years ago, we are now at 40. Our classes have grown in size, as well as the number of classes and staff. This isn't just about numbers but about the quality of education we can provide.

The classroom environment is enhanced through the increased conversation and participation. We've also added resource room support which has enabled us to welcome new students, regardless of prior Jewish learning, and to effectively integrate them into the classroom.

Much work has been done to continually refine and develop our curriculum, including the ordering of new textbooks and teaching aids. We've also increased the prevalence of experiential learning, with trips to the sanctuary to see the Torah scrolls and historic rimonim (Torah bells) and occasionally even sitting in on actual synagogue weekday prayer services or conducting our own. This has given the children the opportunity to experience Jewish living in a tangible way, giving context and meaning to their more structured Hebrew School learning.



WHAT'S UP @ PTTs:

**SUNDAY,
DECEMBER 9**

PTTS Hanukkah Party
9:30 am for students
in grades 2-8.

**SUNDAY,
DECEMBER 23**

No class.

**THURSDAY,
DECEMBER 27**

No class.

**SUNDAY,
DECEMBER 30**

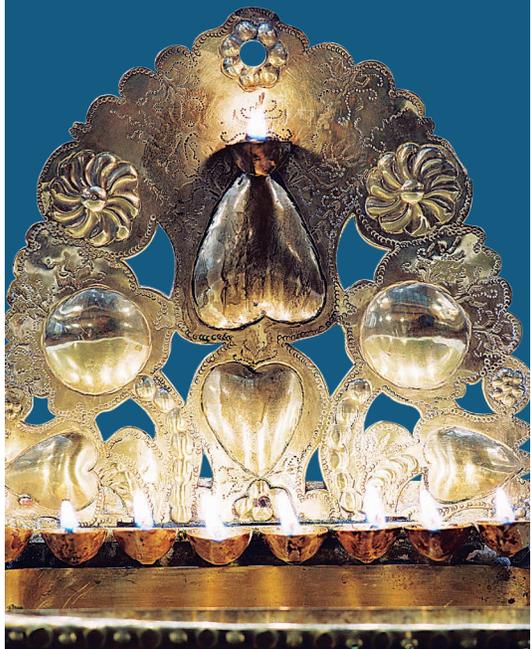
No class.

**SUNDAY,
JANUARY 20**

No class.

Get THIS:

Our Hanukkiah we light in the Synagogue dates back to 1730 or earlier! The United States only declared Independence in 1776!



THAT'S CLASS

News from Each of Our Classrooms

Tamar Garbow, Preschool

What a wonderful start to the year we have had in the Preschool room! Each week is filled with learning, fun, and friendships! We are learning the *Shema* and *Modeh Ani* prayers, practicing every week during circle time.

The children are so excited about our classroom *Tzedakah* box and it is filling up fast; we can't wait to see how much more we can collect!

We have begun our quest of the Aleph-Bet, focusing on a new letter each week and learning new words that begin with that letter. We have also begun our journey through the *Parshiyot* (weekly portions) of the Torah, learning about Creation, Noah and the flood, and the *Avot* and *Imahot* (forefathers and foremothers), and doing fun projects to go along with the stories. The children bring so much enthusiasm and energy to each week's class.

Chaya Sarah Shelton and Tali Wachspress, K-1

We are learning all about the exciting stories from the weekly *Parasha*. The children have been making books with their own illustrations as well as fun projects that highlight a main event from them.

The children have been learning to recognize, read and write the letters of the Aleph-Bet by decorating letters with art materials, building the letters with sticks, drawing letters in the air with magical writing wands and playing the "match & name the letters" game.

Lauren Schneider, 2-3

The second and third graders have been hard at work. The students have begun their study of the first book of the Torah (*Bereshit*). They have studied the story of creation, Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and Noah and the flood. The students have been reflecting on how these stories apply to their own lives.

When they studied the story of creation the students discussed what they thought G-d did on the first Shabbat. They compared this with their current experiences and knowledge of the variety of ways Shabbat is celebrated today. The students learned that they are responsible for their own actions by analyzing the story of Adam and Eve when they made the decision to eat from the tree of knowledge. From Noah, the students learned about standing up for what they believe in.



WHAT do you KNOW!

What holidays other than Hanukkah have 8 days?

- a) Pesah
- b) Purim
- c) Rosh Hashanah
- d) Sukkot

(correct answers: a and d)

Abi Kurzer and Jaclyn Frankel, 4-5

The past few months have been very exciting for our 4th and 5th graders in Hebrew School. It has taken three years, but this past month we concluded the last book of the Torah, completing all five books! We will be making a *siyum* (a party) to celebrate this fantastic achievement.

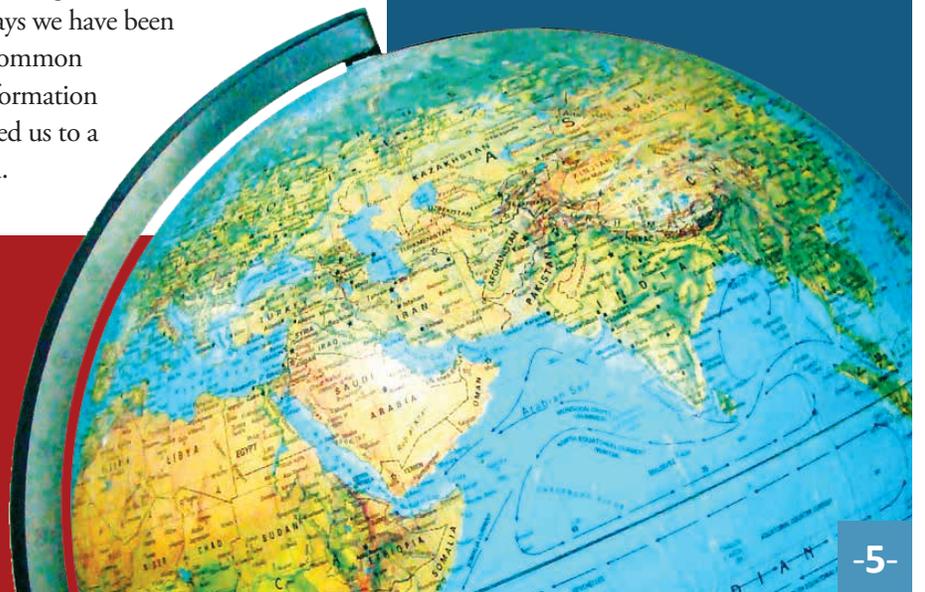
We learned about the Jews' experience in the desert, the way they travelled, enemies they encountered and the death of Aron and Moses. After Hanukkah, we will begin with the continuation of the story of the Jewish people with Joshua leading them into the land of Israel. In conjunction with that we will study the geography and culture of Israel in modern times. Well done to everyone for a fantastic beginning.

Illana Schrier 6-8

It's been a busy year so far in the 6-8th classroom with new students and new subjects, but the students have proven up to the task! From day one, the students have been getting acquainted with Hebrew phrases both important for in the classroom and out, and by now, they're able to say them quite fluently. They can say the date, ask if there is homework and many other helpful phrases. They have mastered their understanding of the Hebrew question words *eifo*, *matai*, *lama*, *eize*, *ma*, *mi* and *eikh*, which they demonstrated through a fun and competitive trivia game.

We've also begun to explore the Jewish life cycle, learning about the ritual associated with these milestone events. On Thursdays we have been focusing on the bar/bat mitzvah. We've discussed common misconceptions and discovered some surprising information about what this important event is all about. This led us to a deeper discussion about what it means to be Jewish.

Can you find
ISRAEL
on a map?



Get to KNOW US:

**Rabbi
Shalom Morris**
Principal

Alana Shultz
Program Director

Illana Schrier
6th-8th Grade Teacher

**Abi Kurzer and
Jaclyn Frankel**
4th-5th Grade Teachers

Lauren Schneider
2nd-3rd Grade Teacher

**Chaya Sarah Shelton
and Tali Wachspres**
K-1st Grade Teachers

Tamar Grabow
Pre-K Teacher

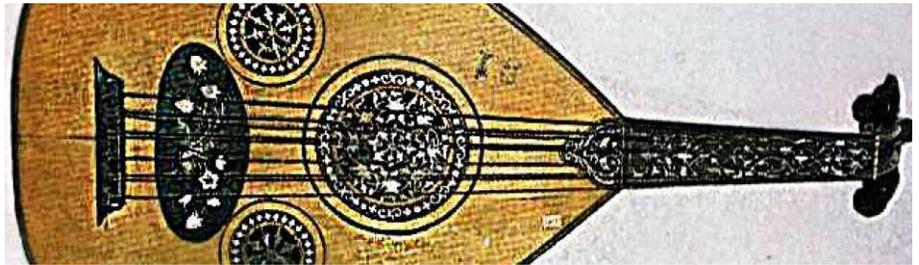
**Rafi Blumenthal,
Talia Kaufman, and
Rena Rotter**
Shabbat Group Leaders

**Liz Rios and
Shanade Hernandez**
*Toddler Program
Teachers*

Shirel Gidekel
Bilingual Birdies Teacher

WHAT'S MORE

Other Congregation Events and Happenings



Sephardic Music Festival

Tuesday, December 11, 7:00 pm
Doors open at 6:00 pm | Hanukkah lighting at 6:50 pm

In celebration of Hanukkah, we present an evening with two beautiful and festive sets from **Lev-Yulzari Duo and Friends** and **Vanessa Paloma** showcasing the Sephardic musical tradition, in our majestic sanctuary.

The annual Sephardic Music Festival is in its 8th year and we are proud to collaborate on this year's event with the America-Israel Cultural Foundation and the American Sephardi Federation.

Purchase tickets online:

\$15 for CSI, ASE, AICF members
\$20 for non-members
\$8 for children

At the door:

\$20 members
\$25 non-members

To learn more about the Sephardic Music Festival, the performers, or to purchase tickets online, visit www.shearithisrael.org/sephardicmusicfestival.

Adult Hebrew Classes

Parents! Sign up for Adult Hebrew classes. Three levels offered.
January 13- March 17
Sundays 10:00 - 11:00 am

\$70. Light breakfast included. For more information or to register, contact smorris@shearithisrael.org.