



2026-2027 RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Course Guide

PRIMARY COURSES - GRADES K-2

TRIMESTER 1

The Art of Imagination – Art-infused lesson plans and activities developed by the Skirball Cultural Center for young learners, inspired by its Noah’s Ark at the Skirball installation. It’s geared towards students in K-Grade 2 and uses storytelling, creative expression, community building, and imagination as tools for learning and connection.

Let’s Discover Fall Holidays – Do fun activities as we learn about the Jewish holidays. This course will engage emerging readers and help them discover their own connections to the holidays of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Simchat Torah, and Hanukkah. Each week, we will explore the meaning of a holiday, its objects, and rituals, and read a retelling of the holiday origins.

Let’s Discover Kindness – Invites students to explore how Jewish values guide us to treat others with compassion, respect, and care. Through stories, discussion, and hands-on activities, learners will practice acts of kindness toward friends, family, and the wider community. Students will discover concepts like chesed and tikkun olam and see how small actions can make a big difference.

Shomrei Teva: Jewish Nature Explorers – In this joyful, movement-filled class, students explore Jewish teachings about caring for the earth through games, stories, and hands-on nature activities. Each week focuses on a different element of the natural world—trees, water, animals, sun, and moon—while introducing age-appropriate Jewish values and blessings. Through active learning and outdoor exploration, children discover that protecting our world is a Jewish responsibility and a joyful mitzvah.

TRIMESTER 2

My Synagogue – Introduces students to the people, places, and practices that shape our sacred community. They will meet clergy, staff, and leaders and learn how each person helps the congregation thrive. Students will explore the sanctuary and chapel, discover ritual objects, and practice respectful ways to participate in these holy spaces. By the end, learners will feel more confident and understand how they are an important part of synagogue life.

The Art of Imagination – Art-infused lesson plans and activities developed by the Skirball Cultural Center for young learners, inspired by its Noah’s Ark at the Skirball installation. It’s geared towards students in K-Grade 2 and uses storytelling, creative expression, community building, and imagination as tools for learning and connection.

Let's Discover Spring Holidays – Do fun activities as we learn about the Jewish holidays. This course will engage emerging readers and help them discover their own connections to the holidays of Tu BiSh'vat, Purim, Passover, Yom Ha'atzma'ut, and Shavuot. Each week, we will explore the meaning of the holiday, its objects and rituals, and read a retelling of the holiday origins.

Mensch Makers – In this joyful, movement-filled class, students explore Jewish values like kindness, bravery, gratitude, and friendship through games, stories, and hands-on activities. Each week focuses on a different middah (character trait) and gives children practical ways to live their Jewish values every day. Through play and community-building, our youngest learners discover that being a mensch starts now.

TRIMESTER 3

The Art of Imagination – Art-infused lesson plans and activities developed by the Skirball Cultural Center for young learners, inspired by its Noah's Ark at the Skirball installation. It's geared towards students in K-Grade 2 and uses storytelling, creative expression, community building, and imagination as tools for learning and connection.

My Synagogue – Introduces students to the people, places, and practices that shape our sacred community. They will meet clergy, staff, and leaders and learn how each person helps the congregation thrive. Students will explore the sanctuary and chapel, discover ritual objects, and practice respectful ways to participate in these holy spaces. By the end, learners will feel more confident and understand how they are an important part of synagogue life.

Alef Bet Lab – Through song and games, free work time, and art, students will explore letters of the Hebrew alphabet and learn to recognize touchstone Jewish words. This class encourages exploration and creativity and is a required, 2nd grade only class.

INTERMEDIATE COURSES - GRADES 3-5

TRIMESTER 1

Israel Through Science – In this exciting and interactive class, students explore groundbreaking inventions and scientific breakthroughs emerging from Israel – and the ways they are improving lives around the globe.

Mensch Maker – Students explore timeless Jewish values in an accessible and exciting way. Through real-life examples, interactive activities, and a wealth of Jewish wisdom, this class will help students make ethical choices, take positive actions, and treat all people– including themselves– with integrity and respect.

My Synagogue – Introduces students to the people, places, and practices that shape our sacred community. They will meet clergy, staff, and leaders and learn how each person helps the congregation thrive. Students will explore the sanctuary and chapel, discover ritual objects, and practice respectful ways to participate in these holy spaces. By the end, learners will feel more confident and understand how they are an important part of synagogue life.

Holiday Quest – In this class, students will explore the meaning of the Jewish holidays, learning about the rituals, traditions, and prayers that shape each celebration. Along the way, we will create space for thoughtful conversations about God—what Jewish tradition teaches and what students themselves wonder, believe, and question. Through stories, activities, and discussion, students will discover that Judaism welcomes curiosity and that their own ideas are an important part of their Jewish journey.

TRIMESTER 2

People of the Book – A book club designed for elementary school children, where they explore Jewish literature, stories, and values through engaging and age-appropriate books. The class encourages discussions on themes like kindness, community, faith, and perseverance, helping kids to understand how these values are reflected in Jewish life.

My Synagogue – Introduces students to the people, places, and practices that shape our sacred community. They will meet clergy, staff, and leaders and learn how each person helps the congregation thrive. Students will explore the sanctuary and chapel, discover ritual objects, and practice respectful ways to participate in these holy spaces. By the end, learners will feel more confident and understand how they are an important part of synagogue life.

Shem Tov – A good name is built by what we say, what we do, and how we treat people. In this class, we will explore character traits that build a good reputation, practice kavod, kindness, honesty, and responsibility, and reflect on how our choices affect others.

Midrash Makers: Becoming Torah Storytellers – Students will learn what midrash is, explore classic biblical stories, notice “gaps” in the text, and create their own imaginative interpretations and stories that expand the Torah narrative.

TRIMESTER 3

My Synagogue – Introduces students to the people, places, and practices that shape our sacred community. They will meet clergy, staff, and leaders and learn how each person helps the congregation thrive. Students will explore the sanctuary and chapel, discover ritual objects, and practice respectful ways to participate in these holy spaces. By the end, learners will feel more confident and understand how they are an important part of synagogue life.

Shem Tov – A good name is built by what we say, what we do, and how we treat people. In this class, we will explore character traits that build a good reputation, practice kavod, kindness, honesty, and responsibility, and reflect on how our choices affect others.

I Have Some Questions About God – Students will be presented with twelve real questions that children ask about God and spirituality, each answered by a different rabbi through thoughtful, story-based responses. This class invites young readers to explore multiple perspectives, honor their curiosity, and develop beliefs. Through engaging stories and reflective activities, it encourages meaningful conversations between children and adults in their lives about faith, doubt, and personal understanding.

Living Jewish Values – Jewish values are all over the Torah—they're like the guidebook for how we treat other people and how we live our lives. These values help us decide what's right, how to be kind, and how to make good choices, even when it's hard. In this class, we'll discover some of the most important values in our tradition and figure out how we can use them in our own everyday lives.

ADVANCED COURSES - GRADES 6-7

TRIMESTER 1

The Long Game: Being your Best Self – Based on the evolution of Joseph, this unit invites students to wrestle with complex emotions, moral ambiguity, leadership, and forgiveness through Joseph's full life story.

History of the Jews in America – The story of a people who brought their history and their traditions, language, culture, and ideas to a new land and participated in the bold experiment of growing and developing America.

TRIMESTER 2

People of the Book – A book club designed for students in middle school, where they explore Jewish literature, stories, and values through engaging and age-appropriate books. The class encourages discussions on themes like kindness, community, faith, and perseverance, helping kids to understand how these values are reflected in Jewish life.

Jews Who Changed the World – Students will explore the lives of remarkable Jewish individuals who transformed science, justice, culture, and society. Through stories, discussion, and creative activities, students will discover how Jewish values inspired these leaders to make a difference. Along the way, we will ask what we can learn from their choices and how we can use our own talents to help shape the world.

TRIMESTER 3

The Golem – Centered on the myth and legend of the Golem. The course blends text study, history, ethics, literature, art, and place-based learning, and is designed to help students think critically about power, responsibility, creativity, and what it means to be human—all through a Jewish lens. Students will also explore how Jewish folklore about protecting the vulnerable influenced the creation of modern superheroes by Jewish American comic creators.

Jewish Ethics Lab – Students will explore real-life questions about right and wrong using Jewish texts, stories, and discussion. Together we will investigate dilemmas about friendship, honesty, responsibility, justice, and caring for others, while discovering how Jewish tradition helps guide our choices. Students will experiment with ideas, debate different perspectives, and see how Jewish values continue to shape the way we live today.