

EDUCATION



Sherri Morris, Director of Congregational Learning, 973-763-0119. smorris@bethelnj.org

Shalom!

I am constantly amazed and impressed by the exciting learning that goes on in our classrooms. Below is an opportunity for our teachers to share with you the wonderful things they are doing.

Please read on to see what has been going on all year plus what's yet to come.

Morah Mary Beth reports that *Kitah Gan* kept busy acquiring and playing games with Hebrew letters, creating individual Megillot Esther, and acting out the Purim story. We worked like slaves (couldn't resist!) getting ready for Pesach. Our goal was to know the story line, from when Joseph entered Egypt to the time of the Exodus. We created a four-questions book that asked and answered the age-old questions in an age-appropriate way. The class continues to enjoy sharing our experiences and hopes during "Shalom & Welcome Time," that the *Sh'ma* is still the highlight of *t'fillah*. Our Jewish "Show and Tell" always adds a fun note to the day!

Morah Leemor's students in *Kitah Aleph Rishon* relate what they learn to their own personal stories. Morah Leemor says students focus on the blessings and the holidays, and remind each other how lucky they are and the importance of *tzedakah*. Every Aleph Rishon student has been creating a Hebrew Pictionary. Students write and read words they've learned, including almost all vowels and letters. They love their Weekly Torah reading and discussion time and recently finished learning about the Ten Commandments and *Parshiyot* that correspond to Pesach.

Morah Hezzy The children in *Kitah Aleph Sheini* have learned the stories of the first two books of the Torah, and will continue with the next two. Students have also reviewed the *Aleph-Bet* through various learning modalities and have been experiencing the history, themes and emotions that surround the various Jewish holidays. Whether it's discussing their feelings about the sound of the *shofar*, sharing their family's experience with bringing home the *Kitah Aleph Shabbat* Box, or learning about the mysteries of the Passover seder, the children share their own thoughts about the holidays, enriching their celebratory experience.

Morah Devorah relates that *Kitah Bet Rishon* is barreling through the Hebrew alphabet. Her once "shy and retiring students" now insist on learning more Hebrew, and jump out of their seats to read for Morah Sherri. Torah study continues to be the favorite subject, particular when it involves family drama, such as the stories of Jacob and Esau, and of Joseph and his brothers. Of course, they dived into Pesach, learning prayers and songs and creating something special for the seder tables.

Morah Rebecca said *Kitah Bet Sheni* learned all about the 10 plagues of Passover and what miracles God performed for the Jews in Egypt. They also learned about Moses and his journey to becoming leader of the Jewish nation. We have been learning many new Hebrew words and phrases, and are now able to play "Simon Says" in Hebrew!

Morah Rivka and *Kitah Gimmel* have revisited the stories of Genesis and, and began a journey with Moses and the Israelites

into the Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments. The class has also explored the holidays with art, music, theater and games, and has had long discussions about various tefillot, including the *Sh'ma*, *V'ahavta*, and *Barchu*. Students are also discussing the first five commandments and will cover *Kashrut*, *Tallit* and *Tefillin* and the meaning of Shabbat. As you can see, they are very busy!

"*Kitah Dalet* is alive with exciting singing, acting and dancing—all to add fun and retention to learning" says **Morah Leemor**. The class focused on understanding the *Sim Shalom*, *Shalom Rav* and *L'cha Dodi* prayers, and created their own *siddurim* (prayer books) with unique interpretations. Students practice their Hebrew by reading the prayers in groups and with partners, and study their meaning by interpreting them in their own words and exploring their personal theologies. They are also working to master Hebrew script as well as they have with print.

Cantor Ron and *Kitah Hay* are especially active in their *Midrash* studies, which focused on the traditional stories of Abraham, Sarah, Ishmael, Isaac, Rivka, and Eliezer. They have expressed their understanding of these Midrashim in arts and crafts projects, and, as part of their Hebrew curriculum, they have been studying the *Avot*, *Gevurot*, and *Kedushah* prayers of the Amidah. Each week, students submit for our "Questioning Box" Which sparks lively discussions.

Morah Mindy *Kitah Vav* classes on Wednesday afternoons have mastered the art of chanting Trope and are looking forward to demonstrating their skills for the congregation. They have examined the mitzvah of *Bikur Cholim*, visiting the sick, and brainstormed ways to perform this mitzvah. Check out the hallway bulletin board for their display! Morah Mindy thanks parents for "sharing your insightful and thoughtful children with me!"

On Sundays, **Rav Daniel** and *Kitah Vav* have been studying stories from the Prophets and learning about the history of the Jews in Europe and the beginnings of Zionism. They have studied Jewish leaders and thought about what they can teach us about leadership today. In History, students are connecting to the community experiences of the past through film, literature and their own imaginations. In weeks to come, they will learn about the formation of the State of Israel, and what challenges it - and the Jewish people - face today.

Morah Esther reports that *Kitah Zayin* successfully presented its "Heroes of the Shoah" display to Kitot Hay and Vav, which was a great learning experience all around! The class is looking at historical documents detailing the history of anti-Semitism and were excited to join Morah Sherri in March to visit the JTS Rare Book Room, since the class inspired the trip visit when they found and looked at old copies of the Talmud. It was an incredible experience for all!

Thank you for letting me share all the excitement of JLC with you. I look forward to the next couple of months. Keep your eyes open for registration for the 2010-2011 year!

B'vracha,
Morah Sherri Morris