

CURRICULUM

The curriculum at Raker Religious School is designed to empower our students to reflect on the following question as it pertains to their personal identity, their family, their lived experiences, and the greater community:



“How is Judaism relevant to me and the world around me?”

As students continue to progress in their education year after year, their answers to this question will change and grow with them. They will grapple with new questions, encounter new ideas, reaffirm and alter their personal beliefs about the world, and engage in various experiences that will help shape their wonderful, complex, and ever-evolving identities.



Mazel Tots, Kindergarten, Grade 1

Our younger students begin their Jewish journey by exploring foundational Jewish topics and elementary Hebrew. They will be exposed to the Jewish holidays, important Jewish symbols, basic Bible stories, and the Shabbat prayers. Furthermore, through the use of the Onward Hebrew curriculum, our students will be introduced to Hebrew letters and words, developing their pronunciation and sound recognition skills. Through the lens of Jewish values, the primary focal points of these early grade levels are building friendships, understanding acceptance, and learning how to share.

Grades 2 & 3

Grades 2 and 3 delve deeper into the study of the Jewish holidays, the Jewish calendar, and Bible stories. Upon expansion of these important Jewish topics, students will begin to develop an understanding of Jewish values that help shape a person's character, such as 'kindness' and 'being a mensch.'



Grade 4

Grade 4 analyzes Jewish principles and character development through the study of Jewish history, from Mt. Sinai to Israel. The teachers take a unique approach to help the students understand their own behavior by comparing their behavior to that of Biblical prophets. Additionally, Hebrew studies are elevated as students are introduced to Hebrew decoding to learn the sounds of the Aleph Bet letters and vowels.

Lesson plan: "Be Your Best Self" from the *Living Jewish Values* textbook

Grade 5

Rounding out the students' elementary-level education, Grade 5 concentrates on the study of Israel: its people, culture, history, food, and land. Additionally, our 5th graders enroll in our one-on-one Hebrew tutoring program (required). The tutoring sessions are 25 minutes, once per week (Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday) via Zoom. This is the preliminary preparation ahead of our students' introduction into their B'Mitzvah program the following year.

Lesson plan: "Be A Good Friend" from the *Living Jewish Values* textbook



Grade 6

The primary focus of Grade 6 is B'Mitzvah preparation. Students will be introduced to the B'Mitzvah handbook as well as study the prayers for Shabbat and B'Mitzvah services. In thematic alignment with the lessons learned during B'Mitzvah prep, students will also learn about Jewish traditions and rituals for all the major life cycles, including birth, B'Mitzvah, marriage, death, etc.

Students may continue their midweek Hebrew tutoring should they need it.

Grade 7

The central focus of Grade 7 is the study of the Holocaust and the history of antisemitism. Students will learn the time period and geographical layout of the Holocaust as well as what life was like before and after. Further, the class utilizes the Anti-Defamation League's 'Pyramid of Hate' model to demonstrate the complexity of bias and systemic hatred. Through these studies, the class establishes a baseline to explore character development through survivor stories, text studies, film screenings, and more.



Grades 8/9

Grade 8/9 introduces the Madrichim program. 8/9th graders will learn how to be effective teaching assistants to support teachers in the classroom, work with staff in the front office, and operate the Boker Tov Bistro. In addition, the course of study focuses on comparative Judaism, world religions, and Jewish practices around the world. Speakers from different religious groups and field trips to other houses of worship teach our students about the similarities and differences between Judaism and other religions. The curriculum alternates each year between comparative Judaism and world religions. To enhance the students' experiential learning even further, a yearly class trip will take place to build awareness and community.

Grade 10 ~ Confirmation

In Confirmation Class, students continue to explore the interplay between their own lives and their Jewish identities. Through learning about the topics of God, Torah, and Israel in a discussion-based, interactive classroom setting, students will engage with Judaism on a deep and meaningful level. These discussions about Jewish values and identity will create the context for their winter social justice trip. They will learn about Jewish values and contemporary issues, learn the history of the places we visit, and explore how Judaism grapples with issues that matter to them. Students will have a writing opportunity towards the end of the year to showcase what they've learned in class.



Grades 11/12 ~ Teen Leadership Council

In this program, our teens choose a social justice topic that is important to them. They learn about what Judaism has to say about this issue, and they engage with experts and those with first-hand experience on the topic. Our teens then work together with rabbinic guidance to decide on actions they can take to positively impact this issue. This is a very empowering and educational program. The teens learn how to advocate and create change, and they have the opportunity to do so. In addition, both rabbis continue to work with the students on a whole host of topics. The students also periodically have lunch with the rabbis (Rabbiyo). This program looks great on a college resume, and the students find it to be a good preparation for becoming more independent, active young adult Jews.

