

Toledo Talmud Torah

Judaic Studies and Hebrew Curriculum

***Compiled and Adapted by the
Judaic Studies Team Led by
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MISSION STATEMENT **of Toledo Talmud Torah**

We create lifelong learners for whom Judaism is a central part of their lives. The mission of Toledo Talmud Torah is to foster a caring, challenging and engaging educational environment that will enable each child to develop Hebrew reading, prayer skills and knowledge of holidays to become a full participant in worship and synagogue life.

Important Note on Adopting **a Jewish Studies Curriculum**

Educators are well cognizant of the fact that putting together a curriculum is a monumental task. One must be proficient in the learning material, as well as aware of the level of the students the school, keeping in mind the school's philosophical orientation, and its goals in all areas of study and behavior. This requires significant resources in time, money and expertise that are many times beyond the scope and means of the average school, public or private. Therefore in the secular disciplines various national bodies establish standards, goals and frameworks of study with the clear intention that the fifty states and the District of Columbia adapt and adopt these or elements of them for their curriculums.

In the Judaic disciplines we are really on our own. It goes without saying that creating a curriculum "from scratch" is not something that a small school such as ours is able to do. It is interesting to note in this context that many schools unfortunately do not have a written curriculum for Jewish studies (as ours did not) due to this lack of time and resources.

In this curriculum there are parts that we created, such as the Jewish Studies standards, however for the most part we took parts of other curriculums from similar schools, put much work into adapting them and adopted them for our school. We also include here elaborate standards for foreign language that can be used for the study of Hebrew. For the sources from which we drew material for our curriculum, please see the bibliography.

It is our hope, especially in putting this curriculum on our website that other schools will use this curriculum in their steps towards adapting and adopting a written curriculum, and in the ongoing work that continues once a curriculum is in place. We welcome any feedback on our curriculum.

Introduction to the Toledo Talmud Torah Curriculum

The Toledo Talmud Torah program focuses on imparting knowledge and on developing competencies in Hebrew reading, prayer and holidays in a carefully structured and sequenced way. Each year is designed to build on the previous year and to provide a firm foundation for Jewish life .

The most important goal is to impart a love of learning Torah, a reverence for God and an enthusiasm for all aspects of Judaic studies. We recognize that how students begin their Torah education determines their future path and much thought is expended on approaching each individual child in the most nurturing and stimulating fashion.

The initial study of the *Siddur* aims at enhancing the understanding of individual *Tefillot* and of the place of prayer in the everyday life of a Jew. These are part of what may be termed Jewish life skills. *Shabbat* and the *Chagim* are important foci of classes at all levels, with material of increasing complexity introduced over the years. Students learn *berachot* and aspects of interpersonal behavior.

As the children progress through the school, expectations increase as regards Hebrew reading skill and fluency, with the goal being prayer fluency and the ability to read any prayer, familiar or unfamiliar.

First Year

Hebrew Reading

Letter recognition and usage skills
Letter/sound relationships
Beginning reading and writing skills

Prayer

Oral recitation of specific prayers and brachot (blessings)
Key prayer concepts
Importance of prayer
Concept of G-d

Judaic Studies

Shabbat
Chagim (holidays)

First Year Competencies: Hebrew and Judaic Studies

Every First Year Student will be able to do:

Identify and read all letters of alephbet (Hebrew alphabet)
Identify and write all vowels
Read and print all letter/vowel combinations
Read and print Hebrew words
Write and recognize own Hebrew name

Recite blessings for food
Recite specified prayers

Identify key terminology, practices, and events related to Jewish holidays and observances

Second Year

Hebrew Reading

Cursive writing
Basic reading and writing skills

Prayer

Specified prayers and blessings
Key prayer concepts
Structure of prayer service

Judaic Studies

Chagim (holidays): laws and customs
Jewish calendar

Second Year Competencies: Hebrew and Judaic Studies

Every Second Year Student will be able to do:

Write all letters of alephbet (Hebrew alphabet) in cursive
Read and print Hebrew sentences
Recite days of the week and months of the year in order

Participate comfortably during t'fillah using grade-level prayers
Follow words in the siddur (prayer book) and read prayers
Identify and recite brachot (blessings) for various foods

Explain general concepts and themes of each holiday and observance
Identify and explain the use of basic ritual objects studied during the year

Third Year

Hebrew Reading

Reading fluency and inflection

Prayer

Specified prayers and blessings

Proficiency in daily prayer

Prayer in our lives

Private and communal prayer

Judaic Studies

Chagim (holidays): prayers, people and concepts

Holiday symbols and ritual objects

Third Year Competencies: Hebrew and Judaic Studies

Every Third Year Student will be able to do:

Read and write independently in grade level materials

Use correct pronunciation and inflection in material read and spoken

Understand and use *brachot* (blessings) in various aspects of daily life

Participate comfortably in all prayers during daily *t'fillah* with competence in designated prayers

Begin to develop leadership skills as *shaliach tzibur* (leader of the prayer service)

Explain general concepts and themes of prayer

List the months of the Jewish year in order

Use information about holidays and observances

Fourth Year

Hebrew Reading

Independent reading and writing

Prayer

Specified prayers and blessings

Proficiency in Shabbat prayer

Prayer in our lives

Prayer Leadership

Judaic Studies

Chagim (holidays): expanded conceptual understanding

Fourth Year Competencies: Hebrew and Judaic Studies

Every Fourth Year Student will be able to do:

Read and write prayers or text with accuracy, fluency and confidence

Recite prayers with fluency and confidence

Express main concepts of prayers

Explain structure of the *siddur* (prayerbook)

Demonstrate familiarity with Shabbat services

Assume a leadership role in communal prayer

Indicate exact Hebrew date of major Jewish holidays

Expand knowledge of liturgy, history, and practices associated with holidays and observances

Work semi-independently and responsibly in *chevrutot* (traditional one-on-one study)

Bibliography:

- 1) www.mjbha.org – the website of the Melvin J. Berman Hebrew Academy in Silver Spring, MD
- 2) www.jpds.org – the website of the Jewish Primary Day School in Silver Spring, MD