

Teen Programming

The Shir Hadash Teen Program is designed to engage students in grades 8 to 12 in many ways of experiencing Judaism. The courses, and special programs that are offered are designed to give students options in which they can decide how they wish to express their Judaism and to participate in the Jewish community. The program challenges students to explore and articulate their Jewish identities. A range of classes challenge students to use Jewish values and concepts to wrestle with issues confronting them as teenagers, and with events happening in the world.

Our “Havayah” High School Judaic Studies program meets on Sundays following religious school. The multi-year curriculum includes:

- GTI: God, Torah and Israel: What’s In It for Me?
- 3M: Movies, Media and Me
- In Their Shoes
- The Jewish Lens
- Senior Seminar: Seniors engage in a program to prepare them for Jewish life on the college campus.

Leadership training opportunities include:

- Teen Retreat: We join with other Reconstructionist teens from across the Midwest for this annual weekend of studying, socializing, and building community.
- Madrichim program: This program engages our students as teaching assistants. They act as role models, lead small-group activities, and assist individual students.



Education Director Geoffrey Prass is an experienced religious school director and synagogue executive director. He holds a joint degree in Jewish Studies and Studio Arts from the University of Minnesota, and a Certificate in Synagogue Management from Hebrew Union College. He is guided by the philosophy that experiential education lies at the core of any effective classroom. We must not just talk about Judaism, but experience our Judaism whenever and wherever possible.



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Shir Hadash Religious School

2017-2018

For more information, visit our website at www.shir-hadash.org or send an e-mail to Education Director Geoffrey Prass at geoff@shir-hadash.org

Our Religious School

At Shir Hadash's Religious School we believe that experiencing and living Judaism is preferable to "learning about" Judaism. Our intention is to create life-long learners that will question, embrace and experience the Jewish community and their own personal Jewish identity. This is done not only through teaching ethics, Jewish history, holidays, God, Torah and Israel, but by encouraging and guiding our students to explore the meaning and relevance of these diverse topics as they apply to the Jewish community, the world, and themselves.

Our Hebrew Program

- Students are organized by skill level. This enables students to learn and progress at a pace and in an environment that is most conducive to their specific learning needs.
- The goal of the program goes beyond teaching basic decoding skills. Students strive towards the goal of reading Hebrew prayers with accuracy and fluency while challenging them to gain a deeper meaning of our prayers.
- Resources are made available to parents that can enable them to help their child practice and support the learning that happens on Sundays.
- Our *Beit Midrash* is designed to help students who need extra, one-on-one instruction.

- Parents hire a Hebrew tutor about a year prior to the bar/bat mitzvah date. The tutor helps the student learn his or her Torah and Haftarah portion.

Our Jewish Studies Program

Through our Jewish studies program, students are able to:

- Participate in innovative project-based classrooms
- Experience the richness of the Jewish year



- as a community
- Learn in-depth about holidays while not repeating material every year
- Celebrate learning at our creative community days
- Pray and learn weekly with our rabbi and educators
- Engage in an individualized Hebrew program to read and understand Jewish prayer
- Explore the richness of the Torah at age-appropriate levels
- Learn about the Jewish people and traditions through art, music, drama, and technology
- Participate in the Jewish responsibility to care for others through giving *tzedakah* and doing *Tikkun Olam* mitzvah projects

Our **Kindergarten through 2nd grade students** are introduced to the holidays, Torah, and Jewish ethics through a hands-on approach to learning. They experience Shabbat and the holidays through experiential learning and explore Torah Stories through differentiated instruction.

Our **3rd to 7th grade students** have a "core" class where they engage in learning about middot (values/ethics), holidays, Jewish history, God, Torah and Israel and an age appropriate level. The students will also have the opportunity to take a wide variety of electives, including courses on Judaism and Social Action; Connecting to Judaism Through Our Food; Current Events Through a Jewish Lens; and How We Can Use Jewish *Middot* (Values).

Our B'nai Mitzvah Program

At Shir Hadash, becoming a bar or bat mitzvah is the opportunity for our students to demonstrate their ability to take on the responsibility of community leadership.

Each bar or bat mitzvah ceremony is unique and personalized according to the skills, interests, learning styles, talents, and abilities of the individual student.

B'nai mitzvah preparation includes learning a Torah and Haftarah portion, attending a requisite number of other b'nai mitzvah services, and completing a special mitzvah project.