



SAN DIEGO  
JEWISH  
ACADEMY

האקדמיה היהודית סן-דייגו

The pluralistic community day school

# ***FOURTH GRADE CURRICULUM***



**SDJA Positioning Statement:** San Diego Jewish Academy challenges its students to achieve their full **academic** potential and become individuals of strong **moral and ethical character**, while inspiring them to make **Judaism** a vital and relevant aspect of their lives.

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## **LANGUAGE ARTS**

The Language Arts curriculum of the Golda Meir Lower School, which is aligned with the California State Standards, is specifically designed toward developing higher level cognition as well as fostering an abiding interest in reading on the part of the students. The approach to the teaching of literature is one that reflects universal experience as well as the child's real or imagined experience. As a result of this exposure to literature, the student's intellectual curiosity is both stimulated and challenged repeatedly throughout the grades.

The development of oral and written language expression, along with strong reading and writing skills, are major objectives of the language arts curriculum. The major goals are for students to become avid readers and excellent communicators.

Beginning readers are taught to read using a phonics-based program, which also incorporates some of the methodologies of whole language. The study of literature provides the medium for many student-centered language arts activities. The methods in approaching the literature use both questioning and expressive language. The students write prose, poetry, diaries, plays and stories. There are a variety of other mediums used as a complement to the curriculum, including the integration of technology. Overall, the language arts curriculum reflects a humanistic attitude toward the student. The development of the student's self-esteem is taken very seriously. The curriculum endorses Piaget's objectives, which are to develop creative thinking, critical analysis, and a learning environment wherein active learning can occur.

### **Skills**

- Comprehension and analysis of grade-level-appropriate text skills
- Techniques for different forms of written expression (dialogue, letters, essay, etc.)
- Vocabulary and concept development skills
- Extension of spelling and grammar skills
- Research skills
- Higher order thinking skills
- Good speaking standards
- An appreciation for literature

## **MATHEMATICS**

The mathematics curriculum is aligned with the California State Standards. Beginning in kindergarten, our math curriculum helps students make the transition from intuition to concrete operations, and to abstractions and skills with symbols. Mathematics instruction is integrated into other curriculum areas to include applications in social studies, science, the uses of the language of mathematics, and the relationship between mathematics and the visual arts. Problem solving is related to everyday situations and math games serve as review of concepts taught. The following strands are addressed on a recurring basis throughout the program:

- Algebra and the Use of Variables
- Data and Chance
- Geometry and Spatial Sense
- Measures and Measurement
- Numeration and Order
- Patterns, Functions, and Sequences
- Operations
- Reference Frames

The following four themes pervade the curriculum:

Algorithmic and Procedural Thinking,  
which will enable the child to choose the correct operation (+, -, x, ÷) to solve a problem  
Estimation Skills and Number Sense,  
Mental Arithmetic Skills and Reflexes and  
Problem Solving.

### **Skills**

- Understand the concept of decimals
- Understand concepts of geometry
- Understand an introduction to fractions
- Know division facts
- Use the vocabulary of statistics for data analysis
- Explore different algorithms for multiplication and division

## **SCIENCE**

The science curriculum in grades K-5, which is aligned with the California State Standards, is based on the principle that the most effective way for students to learn science concepts is through a balance of hands-on activities and solid content knowledge.

Scientific literacy is an important educational goal for all of our students. Therefore, students are taught to use scientific process skills, critical thinking skills, and scientific reasoning.

The science curriculum involves integrating overarching concepts of science (themes) throughout the various scientific disciplines-life science, earth science, and physical science. These themes provide a framework to guide teachers in developing instructional tools to make science more than a mere collection of facts. It provides a logical sequence and scope of instruction. These themes are instituted and developed throughout a single year's study as well as from the sub-fields of the scientific disciplines.

The themes are:

- Systems
- Constancy and Change
- Models
- Scale

Each of the main scientific disciplines has a unifying concept that is carried from kindergarten through fifth grade. The concepts are:

- Life Science- Life is diverse
- Physical Science- Matter and energy can be changed but not destroyed
- Earth Science- The earth, within its universe, is constantly changing

The following units are taught at the fourth grade level.

Physical Science-Magnetism and Electricity

Theme: Models

Overall Concept: Magnetism and electrical energy are related; a magnetic field can produce electricity, and electric current can produce a magnetic field.

#### Life Science-Population and Ecosystems

Theme: Systems

Overall Concept: Organisms live in specific ecosystems, take part in cycles of energy and matter, and suffer when those ecosystems or cycles are disturbed.

#### Earth Science-The Solid Earth

Theme: Constancy and Change

Overall Concept: Earth is a sphere composed mainly of rock and metal; although seemingly static, earth is constantly changing.

#### Investigation and Experimentation

The student will be able to:

- differentiate observation from inference (interpretation)
- formulate predictions and justify predictions based on cause and effect
- conduct multiple trials to test a prediction and draw conclusions about the
- relationships between results and predictions

## **SOCIAL STUDIES**

The goal of the upper elementary social studies curriculum is the development of literate citizens- individuals with the knowledge, skills, and civic values they need to become active participants in the twenty-first century. The program weaves together knowledge, skills, and citizenship with the focus on depth rather than breadth.

Fourth grade focuses on California history, with emphasis on explorers and settlers, resources, immigration and cultures, and industry.

There are three integrated strands that are found throughout this grade level. These are:

1. Knowledge and Understanding
  - History
  - Geography

- Economics
  - Culture
  - Ethics and Belief Systems
  - Social and Political Systems
2. Civic Understanding and Values
- National Identity
  - Constitutional Heritage
  - Citizenship
3. Skills
- Study Skills
  - Visual Learning
  - Map and Globe Skills
  - Critical Thinking
  - Social Participation

## **JUDAIC STUDIES PHILOSOPHY**

*On three things does the world stand: Study, Service to God, and Deeds of Loving Kindness.*

It is the goal of the San Diego Jewish Academy to engage our students in learning about the rich traditions, history, and experiences of the Jewish people. In so doing, we seek to create a positive, Jewish learning experience for all of our students and to instill them a love of, and pride in, their Jewish heritage. We want our students to graduate with an understanding of Jewish beliefs, values, concepts, and traditions. We seek not only to instill academic learning, but also to help empower and inspire our students to embody what they have learned and to acquire the knowledge and skills for meaningful Jewish living.

We take to heart the Rabbinic teaching, “On three things does the world stand: TORAH, AVODAH, and GEMILUT HASADIM.” Each is central to our Jewish educational philosophy.



TORAH (teaching, study): In the context of our school, we view TORAH as encompassing the teaching of the broadest aspects of Jewish civilization. This includes classical Jewish texts as well as Jewish literature, history, and culture, Hebrew language and the State of Israel. We want our students to be able to apply the teachings of Jewish texts to contemporary issues and to their individual lives. Wherever possible, relevant Judaic content will be integrated into the general studies curriculum.

AVODAH (literally “service” and often translated as “worship”) denotes ritual skills and practices that have the capacity to nurture our spiritual dimension, including *tefilah* (prayer) and observances related to Shabbat and the Jewish holidays. We want our students to develop an understanding of and competency in these skills and practices, and to appreciate the capacity of these observances to enrich their lives and nurture their souls.

GEMILUT HASADIM (Deeds of Loving Kindness) are the Jewish teachings and practices regarding our ethical responsibilities to our fellow human beings. We want our students to internalize the virtue of *derekh erez* (respect toward others) and the responsibility of participating in *tikkun olam* (improving the world). Our goal is for our students to view their Jewish heritage as a meaningful guide for ethical living in a complex world.

As a pluralistic school, we recognize that our students and their families reflect a broad spectrum of Jewish background and practice. We seek to engender respect and appreciation for the various approaches to Judaism and, at the same time, to emphasize that our Jewish heritage is a common bond that unites all Jews.

## **IVRIT/ HEBREW**

### **Philosophy of Hebrew Language and Literature at SDJA**

Our Hebrew language program is an integral part of the curriculum. Hebrew is a key that opens the doors of Jewish learning and connects us with Jews past and present. It is both the language of classical Jewish texts - from the TANAKH (Bible) to the SIDDUR (prayer book) -- and the modern, living language that unites us with Israel.

We seek to have our students develop facility in reading, speaking, and understanding both written and oral Hebrew, as well as some ability in writing. Our Hebrew program is taught through the immersion process (*ivrit b'ivrit*) wherein the teacher speaks in Hebrew and the goal is for students to do the same. The ability to speak Hebrew with confidence will enable our students and graduates to feel at home in Israel and to communicate with Jews around the world.

In the fourth grade, students will be using *Haverim B'Ivrit*. Other curricular materials may be used based on student needs. Students will be grouped based on their Hebrew knowledge.

### ***Haverim B'Ivrit***

Literary Units of Study:

- 1. *Hatiyul Shel HaKitah (Field trip with the Class)*** focuses on taking a class field trip in Israel. The beginning chapters emphasize the preparation for the field trip, including getting permission slips signed by parents and learning the rules of riding a school bus. In the middle chapters, students will learn about Israel through the five senses, with an emphasis placed on the seven species related to Israel. In the concluding chapters, students will be comparing the Biblical story of Abraham welcoming the three strangers to situations as they relate to us today.
- 2. *Aharei Halimudim (After school)*** teaches about different activities that children in Israel explore after school hours. The children will learn about activities including: swimming, playing the recorder, performing in a concert, playing basketball, going to the museum, and taking folk dancing and cooking classes. The stories will also focus on the emotional aspect of the children's feelings when they have to perform or play a match in front of their family and friends. Another part of the book refers to the children's different personalities and compares one of them to an old story about King David.

**Based on the above units of study, students will be able to:**

- Strengthen comprehension and verbal skills through class conversations and activities (e.g. in a Hebrew conversation students will be able to state the time, date, weather, and their age).
- Strengthen reading skills through the above-mentioned units of study and independent reading.
- Strengthen writing skills through compound sentences, usage of paragraphs, short stories, and descriptive themes.
- Conjugate possessive words (e.g. MY school, HER school, HIS school).
- Conjugate verbs in the present and past tense in *Pa'al* and *Pei'el* verb forms.
- Expand Hebrew vocabulary.
- Continue to distinguish between masculine and feminine, singular and plural, nouns and adjectives.
- Continue to identify Hebrew root of words (e.g. *LoMeD*).
- Continue to identify the infinitive verb form (e.g. TO read).
- Easily identify definite article (e.g. IN THE school).

## **TANAKH/BIBLE**

### **Philosophy of Bible Study at SDJA**

An integral part of the Judaic Studies curriculum at the San Diego Jewish Academy is the study of the TANAKH (Bible)\* because it is the source of the spiritual history, literature and values of our people. It is the foundation of our Jewish civilization and the source of the ethical and ritual MITZVOT (commandments), which have been central to Jewish life throughout the ages. It is the record of what the Jewish people has understood as the basis and meaning of the covenant between God and the Jewish people.

We teach both the simple, literal understanding of the text as written (*pshat*) and the interpretive understandings of the text (*drash*) at appropriate grade levels, always maintaining the distinction between the two. While both are integral to the study of Torah, teachers are expected to distinguish between them when teaching Torah to their students. Through the study of classical and modern day commentaries and interpretations, alongside the literal text, we are encouraging our students to analyze, interpret and internalize the original text as it relates to their lives today, and as a guide for their lives in the future.

As a pluralistic school, we recognize that our students and their families reflect a range of perspectives on Torah. As a community school, we acknowledge a variety of perspectives in our teaching and share this with our students in age-appropriate ways. We concentrate our studies on the content and meaning of the text.

Students will continue to learn how to do a close reading of the Bible by studying the second half of *Bereisheet* (Genesis) and a few selected parts of *Sh'mot* (Exodus). Students will use an English translation of the biblical text that is age appropriate so that they can experience first hand the beauty and richness of the primary Jewish text.

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Students will be able to:

- Recount the various Biblical stories with a deeper understanding.
- Begin to do close reading of text in both English and Hebrew.

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\* *The TANAKH includes the TORAH (Five Books of Moses) as well as the NEVIIM (Early and Latter Prophets) and the KETUVIM (Writings).*

- Begin to notice Biblical patterns in the text (e.g. the use of particular words that repeat themselves throughout *Bereisheet* – the Hebrew root of *ADaM*: *DAM* – blood, *ADAM* – human, *ADAMA* – soil).
- Utilize *midrashim*, interpretive texts and commentaries, to gain further insight into the meaning of the Torah.
- Develop a deeper understanding of key Biblical figures in text and their impact on the Jewish people.
- Be exposed to *hevruta* style learning when studying Biblical text.
- Continue to find personal meaning from text.
- Continue to be exposed to basic key terms in Hebrew and English (e.g. *SHOMER AHI* – my brother’s keeper, and *HINEINI* – I am here).
- Continue to learn about *parashat hashavuah*, (the weekly Torah portion).

## **JEWISH HOLIDAYS**

The San Diego Jewish Academy strongly believes that observing the Jewish holidays enhances Jewish life on a consistent basis. To that end, each year students are engaged in studying the meaning and observances of Shabbat, Rosh Hodesh, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Simhat Torah, Hanukkah, Tu B’Shevat, Purim, Pesah, Yom Hashoah\*, Yom Ha’atzmaut, Lag Ba’Omer, and Shavuot through a variety of teaching methods and practices. In addition to this, and through the assistance of our PTO, we are able to provide unique opportunities for our students to mark these special occasions on the calendar.

Students will be able to:

- Gain a deeper understanding of the historical context to the Jewish holidays.
- Continue to learn about the Jewish holidays in Hebrew and English through reading, writing and verbal skills.
- Continue to engage in basic critical analysis of the Jewish holidays in English.
- Continue to develop personal meaning of the Jewish holidays.
- Continue to read and recite prayers in Hebrew associated with each of the Jewish holidays.
- Continue to identify key terms, symbols, rituals, and customs in Hebrew and English.

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\* Yom Hashoah is taught age appropriately to the third, fourth, and fifth grades with great care and sensitivity

## **TEFILLAH/PRAYER**

*Tefillah* links Jews from the past to the present. Students participate in prayer services on a daily basis. During this time, students learn both the *kevah* (fixed words and times) and *kavannah* (meaning and intention) of the prayers for the weekday and Shabbat service. Every Friday afternoon, students participate in a grade-wide *Kabbalat Shabbat* service to anticipate the arrival of Shabbat.

## **ISRAEL**

Recognizing the significance of the State of Israel, its national institutions, and our strong bonds to the land and the people of Israel, we seek to instill in the students a connection to Israel as well as a sense of responsibility for its future. In each of the classrooms K – 5, there is a clock set on Israel time as well as a map of Israel so that our students can be cognizant of Israel on a daily basis. All classes also have an Israeli flag and sing *Hatikvah* every day as part of their morning routine. Students are regularly involved in learning about current events and various projects in Israel and help to contribute to worthy organizations such as *Yad L’Kashish* (Life Line For the Old), A Package From Home, Alyn Hospital and Magen David Adom.

Additionally, over the past five years, we have developed a very strong connection to San Diego’s sister community in Israel, Sha’ar HaNegev. Teacher exchanges, student pen-pal writing and Sha’ar HaNegev’s inclusion in various SDJA programs have helped to strengthen our relationship with the elementary school in Sha’ar HaNegev and give Lower School students and faculty an opportunity to connect with the people of Israel on a very personal level.

*Yom Ha’atzmaut*, (Israel Independence Day), is also an important day at school. In the Lower School, regular classes cease and all teachers, both general and Judaic, prepare special Israeli activities, including arts and crafts, geography activities, writing activities, Israeli Folk dancing and other cultural experiences for the students to help them gain a deeper sense of Israeli culture. Our Israeli faculty and Hebrew language program work as other vehicles for teaching about Israel and infuse Israeli culture into our school setting and upon our students.

## **JEWISH LIFE AND THOUGHT**

Building a foundation for Jewish ethical living is integral to the curriculum of the San Diego Jewish Academy. We teach these values through a unique approach that includes a wide range of Jewish perspectives about our relationship with one another, our relationship with God, and our responsibility as Jewish individuals. Embedded in this curriculum are projects that help our students put these Jewish values into action.

Students will explore some of the most commonly asked questions about God. To help our students understand that there is no one answer to these difficult questions, they will have the opportunity to learn from six different contemporary rabbis and reflect on their answers and thoughts. This unit of study will enable students to build a basic foundation and belief system when thinking about God. Included in the God questions are:

- How do we know there really is a God?
- Where does God come from?
- If there is one God, why are there so many religions?
- Does God know what I am thinking or what I will do?
- Does God care which team win the World Series or the Super Bowl?
- Does God really make miracles?
- Why is there so much bad in a world created by a good God?

### **Special Jewish Events Include:**

- Torah Fair
- Ongoing Tikkun Olam Projects
- Special grade wide event that culminates a unit of study - *Havdalah*

## **SPECIAL ENRICHMENT SUBJECTS**

### **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

The Physical Education program is based on the premise that the quality and productivity of each individual's life can be enhanced through participation in a comprehensive, sequential, physical education system that promotes physical, mental, social and emotional well being. A physically educated person is one who has mastered the necessary movement skills to participate confidently in many different forms of physical activity, values physical fitness and understands that both are related to health and a positive self-image.

The Physical Education program at the San Diego Jewish Academy enables students to achieve five goals. Each goal is equally important, and each interacts continually with the others. These goals are:

- A. Physical Fitness: To develop and maintain an optimal efficiency level of cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength, flexibility and proper nutrition necessary for participating in daily life and recreational activities.
- B. Movement Skills and Movement Knowledge: To develop effective motor skills and to understand the fundamentals of movement through practice and analysis.
- C. Self Image and Personal Development:  
To develop and maintain a positive self-image and strive to become the best a person can be through planned physical activities.
- D. Social Development:  
To develop appropriate social behaviors by working independently and cooperatively with others during planned physical activity.
- E. Appreciation of Physical Activity:

## **LIBRARY**

Library skills are taught to all classes beginning in kindergarten. Students attend weekly library classes in grades K-5 with the Library Media Specialist. Most lessons are related to their classroom curriculum topics. The students are then encouraged to find books, which interest them and are matched to their individual reading level.

In grades 3-5, the librarian, computer and art teachers collaborate with the classroom teachers to design creative, integrated projects for the students. These are centered on a particular subject in social studies, science or Judaic studies. Students work individually or in small groups to learn and practice research skills to find information and present it in a meaningful

manner, incorporating skills learned in computer and art classes. Finding and presenting information in meaningful ways are considered necessary skills for success in the future

## **COMPUTERS**

Computer instruction begins in kindergarten. The purpose of the computer curriculum is to help students develop computer skills that support learning and personal productivity. Students are introduced to basic computer operations, proper keyboarding skills, concepts and terminology. They begin with directed and guided activities and progress to working more independently.

As students progress, more sophisticated technology skills and knowledge are implemented, and much of the curriculum is integrated with grade level subjects. Students learn to create word processing documents to present information and to enhance presentation of curriculum assignments.

Becoming adept at keyboarding and computer skills is viewed as an important component for success in today's world.

## **ART**

The art curriculum aims to stimulate children to experience the world of art both physically by creating, and spiritually through understanding and appreciating the creations of others. This is accomplished by exercising a variety of art techniques while examining selected artists and topics in art history.

In addition, students have the unique opportunity to integrate information from various academic subjects such as social studies, Judaic studies and language arts to create art projects that reflect their studies. Art is used to enhance and extend learning that culminates in various types of reports and projects.

In grades K-5, students become familiar with many different art terms and media. These include drawing (colored pencils, soft pencils, craypas, chawks), painting (watercolors, Tempera, oil pastels, fabric, acrylic), graphic techniques (calligraphy and lettering, paper cut outs, collage, origami, paper-mache), and 3-D projects (clay sculpture and pottery, paper relief, wire sculpture, metal sheet and foil manipulation).

## **MUSIC**

A music specialist comes to each class in kindergarten through grade five once a week. Students learn about rhythm and instruments, are introduced to classical pieces and composers and learn many songs that are integrated with the Judaic and social studies curriculum. The goal is to introduce students to various kinds of music and have them learn to enjoy music through listening, singing and making music themselves.



Aside from being a specialist in Jewish music, the music teacher has also completed the intensive Level 2 Orff Schulwerk training. She uses Orff instruments and the Orff methodology to lead the students to an internalization of musical concepts as well as a love of music.

Students have many opportunities to perform for fellow students, families and the community at large as they participate in various holiday celebrations.

### **ENRICHMENT ELECTIVES**

Every Friday, an hour is built into the schedule for Enrichment Electives. Fourth and fifth graders may choose from a wide variety of offerings in order to experience a subject not included in the regular curriculum or to study a subject area more in-depth. Students may choose a new elective three times per year. Courses such as kitchen chemistry, math games, art, kosher cooking, poetry, yoga, choir and team-building games add an enriching dimension to the curriculum.







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