

Welcome to JQuest! JQuest is...

- Temple Isaiah's youth education program for children in Pre-K through 7th grade
- An exciting journey of Jewish learning and discovery for children and families
- An opportunity to develop and strengthen Jewish identity, knowledge, and community

In JQuest, we seek to instill in our children and families a sense of commitment to and excitement about Jewish life and Jewish peoplehood. We strive to enable our children and families to understand the Jewish past while being inspired and empowered to create a Jewish life in the present that is committed to tikkun olam. The philosophy and atmosphere of JQuest invites our students to develop a love of the Jewish tradition and the study of Torah, along with the questioning that our tradition encourages. Overall our goal for children and families in JQuest is to be challenged, inspired, and energized by the power of Jewish ideas and traditions.

JQuest Goals

JQuest is designed to help students engage with a rich and varied experience of Jewish tradition and community. While holding to the goals of the Reform Movement listed below, we believe our curriculum should always address the needs of our particular community in the present. We have created a curriculum that is historically continuous with our Jewish past, respects our multi-cultural environment, and embodies the creative and pioneering spirit of the Jewish community of Northern California.

We support the following general goals as stated by the Union of Reform Judaism, striving to create a program of Jewish education which will enable children, teens, and adults to become Jews who:

- Affirm their Jewish identity and bind themselves inseparably to their people by word and deed;
- Bear witness to the brit (covenant between God and the Jewish people) by embracing the Torah through the study and observance of mitzvot (commandments) as interpreted in light of historic developments and contemporary liberal thought;
- Cherish and use Hebrew, the language of the Jewish people;
- Value and engage in tefillah (prayer);
- Further the causes of justice, freedom, and peace by pursuing tzedek (justice) and chesed (loving deeds);
- Celebrate Shabbat and the festivals, and observe the Jewish ceremonies that mark significant occasions in their lives;
- Esteem themselves and others, their own family and the families of others, their own community, and the communities of others;
- Express their kinship with K'lal Yisrael (the community of Israel) by actively seeking the welfare of Jews throughout the world and by developing a relationship with Israel - its people, the land, and the state;
- Support and participate in the life of the synagogue.

We believe these goals are best accomplished through educational experiences for the whole person: body, heart, mind, and soul.



JQuest Schedule

JQuest is a journey of Jewish learning for children in Pre-K through Seventh Grade. The Pre-K program takes place six Sunday mornings during the year, for both parents and children. Children in grades K-2 attend JQuest on Sundays only. 3rd through 7th graders attend JQuest on Sunday morning and one weekday afternoon each week. We offer two Sunday morning sessions – all students attend either first or second session.

Sunday Schedule

9:00-11:00	First Session (Pre-K - 6th grade)
10:30-11:00	Tefillah (Prayer)
10:30-12:30	Second Session (K - 7th grade)

Weekday Schedule

Tuesday or Wednesday, 4:00-6:00 p.m.

Optional supervised study hall Tuesday or Wednesday, 3:30-4:00 p.m.

For more information about JQuest, please contact Director of Education Rabbi Nicki Greninger at rabbi.greninger@temple-isaiah.org or call (925) 284-9191



Why “JQuest” instead of “Religious School”?

There are many reasons we decided to change the name of our program, but perhaps the most important reason is that the term “Religious School” just doesn’t fit, as neither “religious” nor “school” is a good description of our program of Jewish education for kids at Temple Isaiah:

- Jewish education works best when it doesn't look like, sound like, or feel like "school." Yes, we have a curriculum and teachers, and yes, our goals include student learning and discovery. However, that's where the similarities between "Jewish education" and "school" should end. We do not teach subject matter for the sake of mastery of facts or progression from one grade to the next. Rather, we are trying to develop identity, seeking to instill in our children a sense of commitment to and excitement about Jewish life and Jewish peoplehood. Many studies have shown that the best forms of Jewish education (i.e. the ones that 'work' the best) are informal - Jewish camps, youth groups, trips to Israel, etc. So the less our educational programs look like 'school,' the more successful they will be in trying to achieve our goals of building Jewish identity, connection, knowledge, enthusiasm, and commitment.
- Jewish education is not necessarily (and certainly not always) "religious." Judaism is a religion, but it is also a culture, a people, a way of life, a tradition, a community, a nation, a civilization, a sense of identity and a way of seeing and understanding the world. Jewish education ought to help kids discover various entry points to Jewish life - to see themselves as part of the chain of tradition of the Jewish people, in whatever way that might be. So when we call our program "religious," it can be misleading. For some people, the religious aspect of Jewish life is essential, compelling, and meaningful. For others, the term 'religious' is a turn-off and something to avoid. We do talk about and learn about 'religious' things in Jewish education - we explore different connections to God, we study 'religious' texts, we experience prayer - but it is a misnomer to say that what we are doing is 'Religious School' in its entirety.

We changed many aspects of our education program in the last seven years, but we had not yet changed the name... so it is time! Our parent committee (formerly known as the “Religious School Advisory Group”) spent many months working on this change. We eventually chose the name “JQuest” in order to capture the spirit of Jewish learning, discovery, community, and fun that our students and families experience in Temple Isaiah’s education program. We hope you will embrace the new name and will find it preferable to talk about sending your kids to “JQuest” as opposed to “Religious School.”

Your child’s Jewish journey awaits!



HEBREW AND PRAYER

In JQuest, our goal is for children and families to be challenged, inspired, and energized by the power of Jewish ideas and traditions. We seek to provide our students with a living experience of the Jewish tradition and to enable all members of our community to be part of contemporary Jewish life. Our goals for Hebrew and prayer learning therefore fit into that framework. Our educational program aims to enable our children to cherish and use Hebrew, the language of the Jewish people, and to value and engage in tefillah (prayer) as two significant ways to connect to contemporary Jewish life. Our multi-faceted approach to learning Hebrew and prayer is designed to touch the whole person: body, heart, mind, and soul.



THE GOALS OF OUR HEBREW AND PRAYER PROGRAM

Your child will be able to...

Know
לדעת

- Describe the structure and flow of a service
- Explain the themes of key prayers
- Know important Jewish words and phrases in Hebrew (“Jewish Life Vocabulary”)
- Understand (and retain) key words in Jewish rituals and prayer
- Recognize the letters and vowel signs of the Hebrew alphabet

Do
לעשות

- Recite key prayers at synagogue speed with no more than a few mistakes (For example: Sh’ma, V’ahavta, Avot, etc)
- Participate in a Jewish service and in Jewish rituals (For example: know when to sit, stand, sing along, wait while the leader leads, follow along in the siddur, etc)
- Recite/sing blessings and other Hebrew songs/prayers in the home (For example: ha’ motzi, 4 questions)
- Locate “support materials” to be able to recite/sing blessings/songs at home
- Respond to commands in Hebrew
- Decode and read simple Hebrew

Feel
להרגיש

- Develop a love of/connection to/affinity for Hebrew
- Develop a connection to Jewish community through Hebrew/prayer/Jewish rituals
- Value Hebrew as a holy/sacred language
- Value the experience of Jewish prayer
- Develop ownership over his/her prayer life
- See him/herself in the narrative of the Jewish people as expressed through prayer
- Feel confident with his/her Hebrew skills and knowledge

HEBREW AND PRAYER CURRICULUM BY AGE GROUP

Children in JQuest deepen their Hebrew learning from year to year. The following is an overview of our Hebrew and prayer curriculum by age group. For more information about each component of the curriculum, please see page 4 as well as www.temple-isaiah.org/hebrew

Grades K-2:

- Jewish Life Vocabulary
- Hebrew Through Movement
Once a week
- Tefillah – Once a week
- Exposure to Aleph-Bet
- Hebrew Enrichment - optional

Grades 3-4:

- Jewish Life Vocabulary
- Hebrew Through Movement
Twice a week
- Tefillah – Twice a week
- Begin transition from oral literacy to print literacy

Grades 5-6:

- Jewish Life Vocabulary
- Hebrew Through Movement
Twice a week
- Tefillah – Twice a week
- Hebrew through Cooking
Once a month
- Continued transition from oral literacy to print literacy
- B’nai Mitzvah Prep (w/parents)
- Hebrew Boot Camp - 3 months before B’nai Mitzvah Tutoring

Grade 7:

- Jewish Life Vocabulary
- Tefillah – Once a week
- B’nai Mitzvah University (w/parents)
- B’nai Mitzvah Tutoring - 7 months before B’nai Mitzvah

Hebrew and Prayer Curriculum

Jewish Life Vocabulary

One of the important ways that American Jews connect to the Hebrew language is through key Hebrew words and phrases that are part of contemporary Jewish life. In fact, some Hebrew words and phrases are almost un-translatable – they convey values and ideas that are difficult to express with a word or phrase in English. We have developed a curriculum whereby “Jewish life vocabulary” is integrated into all JQuest classes and programs. By frequently hearing, using, and exploring Hebrew terms (such as *shalom*, *mazal tov*, *tikkun olam*, *yasher koach*, *tzedakah*, and more), our children will learn to experience the world through Jewish values and they will appreciate Hebrew as a sacred, Jewish language.



Hebrew through Movement

“Hebrew through Movement” (עֵבְרִית בְּתוֹנוּעָה) is a language acquisition strategy in which students learn Hebrew by hearing and responding to Hebrew commands. Although Hebrew through Movement starts by laying a foundation of modern, spoken Hebrew, it builds toward the goal of making the prayers in our siddur, as well as synagogue and Jewish vocabulary, more easily accessible to those with limited learning time. Hebrew through Movement introduces language in a playful and meaningful way, creating a positive first link between children and the Hebrew language. Hebrew through Movement is supported by the latest brain research on learning, providing an aural foundation for Hebrew that opens the door to more facile Hebrew decoding and reading. By introducing Hebrew through Movement in Kindergarten and continuing through 6th grade, all children in our program will develop a strong foundation of the Hebrew language and knowledge of a core vocabulary of Hebrew words. See www.hebrewthroughmovement.org.

Hebrew Boot Camp

In order to increase motivation, consistency, and focus in learning to decode and read Hebrew, students participate in a 12-week “Hebrew Boot Camp” as a pre-cursor to their B’nai Mitzvah tutoring. Students work one-on-one with a tutor, parent, or teen TA using a program called “Hebrew Learning Side-by-Side.” Students may ‘test out’ of the workshop if they already know how to read Hebrew.

5th & 6th Grade Hebrew Through Cooking

All 5th & 6th graders in JQuest participate in an exciting Hebrew through Cooking program once a month. Students learn how to make foods associated with Jewish holidays, and they expand their Hebrew vocabulary at the same time because all instructions for the recipes are given in Hebrew!

Tefillah (Prayer)

Tefillah (prayer/communal worship) is at the core of the spiritual life of our community. Tefillah is also one of the ways in which Jews celebrate Shabbat and holidays, connect with K’lal Yisrael (the worldwide Jewish community) and take part in synagogue life. As such, we want our children to value the experience of Jewish prayer and be able to participate in tefillah at Temple Isaiah and around the world. We believe the best way to learn tefillah is to participate in tefillah. To that end, students in our community attend tefillah every time they come to JQuest. Our clergy, music specialists, and other prayer leaders teach about the meaning, history, and spirituality of prayer in the context of Religious School tefillah, and we strongly encourage parents to attend tefillah with their children.



B’nai Mitzvah Preparation

Children at Temple Isaiah learn many skills that are essential for becoming b’nai mitzvah through their participation in JQuest, including skills related to Hebrew and prayer. Our Hebrew and prayer curriculum is designed to help students prepare to become b’nai mitzvah, but we also hope that the students will develop a lifelong knowledge and appreciation of both Hebrew and Jewish prayer. Moreover, we believe the b’nai mitzvah preparation process must include the child’s parents, and that the learning specific to b’nai mitzvah should take place slowly over time. Therefore we have several b’nai mitzvah preparation programs in 5th, 6th, and 7th grade, during which parents and their children delve more deeply into the structure, flow, and meaning of Shabbat services. More details about the b’nai mitzvah preparation process, including a detailed timeline, are provided during 5th and 6th grades.

JQuest Programs: Pre-K through 2nd Grade



Pre-K Parent/Child Program

We invite you and your Pre-K child to the joys of Jewish celebration and learning at Temple Isaiah Religious School! Our Pre-K parent/child program consists of 6 sessions on Sunday mornings from 9:00-11:00am during the months of February through May. Participation in our Pre-K program develops your family's love of Jewish tradition and the joys of being a part of the Isaiah community. By attending this program with your child, you will be planting and nurturing the seeds of Jewish identity and commitment. Whether you are new to Judaism, have a traditional upbringing, or are supporting your partner in the decision to educate your children as Jews, this warm and nurturing program will welcome your perspective and provide opportunities to explore and develop ways to make Jewish life personally meaningful and filled with joy.

JQuest: Kindergarten, 1st Grade, and 2nd Grade

Families may choose to enroll in one of these two options:

JQuest Grade-Based Programs

Our grade-based K-2 programs meet weekly and seek to connect children with the ongoing creative life of the Jewish people through music, art, dance, stories, Hebrew, prayer, and discussion. The K-2 curriculum is as follows (in addition to Jewish holidays):

- Kindergarten - The Cycles of Jewish Time (Shabbat, holidays, life-cycle events)
- 1st Grade - Jewish Home (What does it mean to be Jewish at home?) and Torah Stories
- 2nd Grade - Jewish Community, Middot, and Mitzvot (What does it mean to be Jewish outside our homes? Learning about Israel, synagogues, Jewish values, and Jewish actions)

During the year, parents are required to attend two family programs.

Yad b'Yad (Hand in Hand): Family Education Program

Yad b'Yad is a family education program in which children in Kindergarten through 2nd grade and their parents go on a Jewish learning journey together as a family and become part of a community of families who learn together throughout the year. Moreover, this exciting program gives parents the opportunity to study with Temple Isaiah's Rabbis and Cantor, thereby deepening their own Jewish knowledge. Children in Yad b'Yad attend JQuest every Sunday morning and engage in Jewish learning through music, art, dance, stories, Hebrew, prayer, and discussion. Parents in Yad b'Yad join their children every other Sunday in a family-oriented program that includes separate child and adult learning as well as time for families to learn and grow together. Please note that Yad b'Yad is offered during 1st session only (9:00-11:00am). Free childcare is provided for pre-school siblings during "family days," and older children may attend JQuest at the same time. The Yad b'Yad curriculum is a three-year cycle based on the K-2 curriculum (above). See separate Yad b'Yad FAQs for this year's detailed information.



Hebrew Enrichment for Grades K-2

If you would like your child to learn more Hebrew than is feasible in the time we have allotted during Religious School, we encourage you to register your child for our Hebrew Enrichment program! Children will spend 30 minutes each week learning Modern Hebrew through interactive games, music, art, hands-on activities and short conversations. Students in Hebrew Enrichment will also learn to read and write the Aleph Bet and simple Hebrew words. Please note there is an additional Hebrew Enrichment fee.



Preschool Sibling Childcare

Childcare for preschool-aged children is available for all JQuest families on Sunday mornings, with sufficient pre-registration. An additional charge may apply.

JQuest Programs: 3rd through 6th Grade

Philosophy of JQuest “Tracks”

At Temple Isaiah, we acknowledge – and celebrate – that there are many different ways to connect to Judaism and Jewish life. Historically, Religious School was a one-size-fits-all model. In the last several years, we have begun experimenting with a new structure, one in which families have choices about their Jewish learning journeys. Like adults, children connect to Judaism in different ways, and we are delighted to offer a variety of paths of Jewish learning in JQuest to match the various learning styles and passions of the children in our community. Please note that all 3rd through 6th grade tracks include our comprehensive Hebrew & prayer curriculum for 3rd-6th graders at Temple Isaiah. You may opt to do one track for two years, or you may choose to switch tracks after one year. For example, you could sign up for Teva in 3rd grade and switch to Omanut for 4th grade.



3rd & 4th Combined Grade Tracks

Curricular themes: God, Torah, Israel



Teva - Nature

Teva (teh-vah) is our nature program for 3rd & 4th graders, in which you will get to explore God, Torah, and Israel through the lens of nature and the outdoors. While classroom-based, this program includes opportunities for outdoor learning (as weather permits) around the Temple Isaiah campus, the Lafayette Reservoir, and beyond as we celebrate and learn about seasonal, eco, and wilderness-based traditions of the Jewish people. For example, we might have discussions around a fire in an outdoor classroom/ “campground” on the Isaiah campus, take a short hike in order to connect with the experience of Moses climbing Mt. Sinai to get the 10 commandments, or participate in a vegetable garden project connecting with Israel and the holidays. Join us in Teva, where we will make connections between Jewish life and the natural world!
Lead Teacher: Genevieve Greinetz

Stay connected!

- Join the Temple Isaiah JQuest Facebook group.
- Make sure we have your current e-mail address for notices.
- Visit our JQuest blogs at www.temple-isaiah.org/jquest

Bonim – Builders

Bonim (boh-neem) is a track for 3rd and 4th graders who like to build things! In this track you will have the opportunity to learn about God, Torah, and Israel through the experience of construction and building projects both big and small. Activities may include model projects such as building a ‘mini Israel’ as well as full-size projects such as building a sukkah. A wide variety of materials will be used – everything from Legos to clay to wood and more! Please note that while tuition for Bonim is the same as for all other 3rd-6th grade programs, there is an additional Supply Fee. Lead Teacher: Becca Shareff

Omanut – Art

Omanut (oh-mah-noot) is our art program for 3rd & 4th graders, in which you will explore the topics of God, Torah, and Israel through the lens and modality of art. In Omanut you will have the opportunity to spend time immersed in Jewish art, deepen your artistic skills and your spirituality, learn about many of the great Jewish artists and Jewish art-forms, and create your own works of art based on Jewish topics. For example, students in Omanut have studied different Jewish views about God, and then created art pieces in the style of Israeli artist Yaakov Agam to reflect their differing relationships with God. Please note that while tuition for Omanut is the same as for all other 3rd-6th grade programs, there is an additional Supply Fee.
Lead Teacher: Heather Howe-Dennett



5th & 6th Combined Grade Tracks

Curricular themes: Jewish History and Ethics



Shira: Music, Video, and Technology

Shira is an exciting exploration of Jewish ethics and history through music, video, and technology. Students in Shira will interact with Jewish music and musicians near and far, learn about Judaism through the lenses of music and video, and go on a Jewish journey using technological and online resources. Shira students will get to create their own Jewish songs and even their own video! Great for both boys and girls, Shira is all about Judaism, music, video, and technology, so join Shira for a fun-filled Jewish learning adventure! Lead Teacher: Erin Bloom

Edot – Culture

Edot (ay-doht) is our culture-based program. Join us in our time machine and travel back through Jewish history as we visit the Edot – Jewish Diaspora communities – and explore the magnificent cultural tapestry of the Jewish world! Our historical stopovers include the languages, art, literature, music, dancing, and food of Jewish communities around the world. We might learn about Moroccan Jews by learning a bit of their language (Ladino), tasting or making Moroccan dishes, learning Moroccan Jewish songs, and creating “jeta de la mezuzah’s,” which Moroccan Jews hung on their doorposts. Edot is a cultural adventure you don’t want to miss!

Lead Teacher: Charna Schakow



Y’tzira (Creation/Storytelling)

In Y’tzira, students will draw upon their creativity and imagination to bring Jewish history and ethics to life through various mediums of storytelling. You will participate in theatre games, create and act in short skits, write poems and short stories, watch and discuss film clips and create simple sets to immerse yourself and your peers in the topics of study. Examples of activities range from creating three dimensional sets that visually represent Jewish historical periods, to using improv theater games to understand different Jewish ethical teachings. Each unit of study will also include an interactive storytelling experience created by the teacher, whereby students will have to work together to solve a mystery relating to the topic. Sign up for Y’tzira to let your creative juices flow!

Lead Teacher: Maimone Attia



Avodah TA Program

Avodah TAs are 8th-11th grade members of Temple Isaiah who assist in JQuest, and exceptional Avodah TAs work as paid TAs for their senior year. In a typical year we have approximately 40-60 teens helping in JQuest in a wide variety of ways, bringing loads of fun, energy, and talent to our education programs!

See <http://www.temple-isaiah.org/education/avodah-tas/> for details about our Avodah program, which is generously co-sponsored by Women of Isaiah. All incoming 8th-12th graders will receive information about the Avodah application in July.



JQuest 7th Grade Program

At Temple Isaiah, we believe that the seventh grade year is all about building community. We offer JQuest for seventh graders on Sundays only during second session so the entire class can be together and get to know each other on a deeper level.

B'NAI MITZVAH UNIVERSITY (BMU) is designed so that the B'nai Mitzvah process includes parents and creates a close community of families who are experiencing the same life cycle event. The program encourages parents and their 7th graders to discuss the meaning of becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah, engage in dialogue about the nature of prayer and mitzvot, and delve into deeper levels of Torah interpretation.

WEEKDAY 7th Grade JQuest classes are devoted to examining what it means to be a young Jew in today's world. We do this through study of our collective past (primarily focusing on the Holocaust) and through a study of comparative religion, examining Judaism in relation to other world religions. In preparation for becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah, students also participate in a weekly prayer service led by Cantor Korn.

SUNDAY MITZVAH CORPS teams (i.e. Sunday JQuest classes) go off site every other session beginning in December to give students the opportunity to engage in social action projects throughout the Bay Area. The week before going on a community service project, students study the specific mitzvah that they will be fulfilling with that project.

THE SEVENTH GRADE FUND is an exciting program that helps Temple Isaiah's students actively learn about philanthropy and take part in tikkun olam through tzedakah. The Fund was initiated by the Seventh Grade class of 1998, when students agreed to forego buying each other Bar and Bat Mitzvah gifts. Instead, each family chooses to donate the money that would have been spent on these gifts into the Fund. With matching grants from individuals and foundations, the class established itself as a charitable foundation. The class then engaged in a short term grant giving cycle, which included learning about philanthropy, choosing an issue, researching potential grant recipients, and distributing all of the collected money to social service organizations. Each seventh grade class since then has had an opportunity to discuss and vote on its participation in this voluntary program at the beginning of the seventh grade year.



Supporting Students With Learning Differences, Developmental Differences, or Mental Illness

"To provide educational care is to demonstrate authentic respect for a child's unique mind while caring about it and caring for it." (Dr. Mel Levine)

By acknowledging learning differences, communicating regularly with parents, helping students to celebrate and develop their strengths, and teaching through different modes of learning, we strive to provide all of our students at Temple Isaiah with a successful experience of Jewish education.

Parents As Partners

We need parents' collaboration to provide the best experience for our students. Parents are the experts on their children and can provide us with essential information about their children's strengths and unique needs. We see parents as our partners and strive for strong communication among parents, teachers, and our Learning Specialist.

Special Needs Support in the Classroom

In addition to our Learning Specialist, we also have a Special Needs Aide on our JQuest Faculty. Our Learning Specialist works with our in-class aide to determine which students need one-on-one help in the classroom, and our aide spends his/her time with those students who need the most support and guidance.

Contact Us For More Information

We would love to speak with you about JQuest and what it means to be part of the Temple Isaiah community! For more information about our program, we invite you to visit the JQuest page on our website at www.temple-isaiah.org/jquest or call Rabbi Greninger at (925) 284-9191. For questions about membership, contact our Membership Coordinator, Abby Seitelman.



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JQuest at Temple Isaiah: Your Child's Jewish Journey Awaits!