

VISION STATEMENT

The WJC Family School provides a loving, welcoming and enthusiastic environment in which Jewish children and their parents from all backgrounds learn to practice Judaism in meaningful and enlivening ways. Our congregation's Hebrew name, *Kehillat Lev Shalem*, "The Congregation of a Full Heart," serves as a guide for the heartfelt and full-hearted educational experience we endeavor to foster.

I. Engagement:

Context is more important than specific content. It is more important that our families experience the synagogue and organized Jewish life as a loving and caring community than that specific knowledge and academic goals are rigorously met.

We feel that if our parents experience our congregation as a joyful and meaningful community, they will be more likely to remain involved after their child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah. If our children experience the synagogue as a loving and joyful place, they will be more likely to be involved in Jewish life.

II. Creating a Foundation of Jewish Literacy

We care deeply about our specific educational goals. The following is not listed according to priority:

- We work to create a comfortable familiarity for our children and families with important Hebrew prayers and blessings
- We endeavor to give our students the ability to read and decode Hebrew so that they can successfully chant Torah from the Torah scroll at their Bar or Bat Mitzvah, and capably follow Hebrew in our prayer book for their entire Jewish life.
- We provide a basic vocabulary of Hebrew words relevant to synagogue life and the Jewish home for both parents and children.
- We encourage our students and families to attain knowledge of the key *mitzvot* of Jewish life, and an understanding that to live Jewishly requires practicing *mitzvot*. We provide our parents and children an opportunity to name and practice a significant number of *mitzvot* during the course of their education. We wish for our families to gain the tools and skills to practice Judaism and begin to speak about their lives in Jewish terms.
- We provide our families with a comfortable familiarity with the Jewish Holidays and Shabbat, along with a basic understanding of the Jewish calendar.
- We give our students and their families a basic understanding of what the Torah and the *Tanach* are and we teach the core stories of tradition.
- We teach a basic knowledge of modern Jewish history.

III. Establishing the Environment

- We strive to create an environment that encourages all participants in the Family School to safely explore and reflect on their inner lives as well as on their relationship with God.
- We include artistic and creative learning modalities as integral components of our educational methods.
- Our family activities are structured experientially so that parents and children can have meaningful interactions and experience closeness with each other.
- A corollary, yet important goal of our Family School is to give the widely dispersed Jewish families in our area the opportunity to socialize and to create a community together with other Jews. Shared meals and interactive activities are critical to promote this outcome.
- We also strive to create regular opportunities for our Family School families to meet and interact with our broader synagogue community.