

Middles Class Summary--October 13, 2013

In October, the Middles Class learned about Ellis Island. We started by sharing where our ancestors were from before they came to the United States. We found those places on the map. With Sarah, we reviewed the Aleph-Bet, and learned a few Yiddish phrases. She also shared a folk song sung by immigrant families. Together, we “read” the pictures-only book *The Arrival* by Shaun Tan. It is the story of a man who emigrates to a new place. Although the book seems like fantasy, there are many parallels to the journeys some Jewish immigrants took to Ellis Island. As we read, we paused to act out different experiences the man went through - the big ship, seeing his destination for the first time, security, payment - and thought about how he might feel during each event. We decided that immigrating would be scary and confusing, but worth it to get away from something scary. We ended our time by celebrating our arrival in a new place - the playground!

Littles Class Summary--October 13, 2013

This week we learned the song “Shalom Chaverim” with Teacher Sarah, and did some Hebrew alphabet yoga. We colored, read a book about helping others, and learned the word “mitzvah.” We discussed ways that we could perform mitzvot in our community, and with our friends and family.

Juniors Class Summary-- September 22, 2013

It was great to see students back in the Juniors class, and we kicked off our year of studying modern Jewish history with a fun and interactive lesson focused on modern Yiddish literature. After greetings and a game of Jewish Cultural School name bingo, students gave feedback on the kinds of topics and activities they are interested in having incorporated into lessons this year. Then they listened to a short presentation on the history of Yiddish literature, reviewing the origins of Yiddish and learning about the Yiddish renaissance writers who wrote stories, in the people's language, that empathetically told of the sorrows, joys, and struggles of ordinary Ashkenazi Jewish people. After a short break, students returned to the classroom to learn some Hebrew vocabulary for the Sukkot holiday and sing a classic Yiddish holiday song called "A Sikele, a Kleyne" with Sarah. Next, the class split into small groups, and each group read a short story in translation by Shalom Aleichem or I.L. Peretz, two classic Yiddish writers. After talking over some discussion questions related to their stories, each group worked to create a puppet show retelling their assigned story using a set of provided paper puppets cut out from images of Marc Chagall paintings, early 20th century shtetl photos, et cetera. Groups performed their puppet shows for each other and offered their perspectives on the big ideas that the stories raised. To round out the day's lesson, we headed downstairs and created some leaf cut-outs for a decorative banner for Or Emet's sukkah. It was a fun, action-packed morning!

Middles Class Summary-- September 22, 2013

At their first class of the year, the Middles group had a great time learning about Jewish languages and Sukkot. As we got to know each other, we prepared for a good year by talking about what it means to be respectful, and by sharing High

Holiday memories. We talked about Yiddish and Hebrew as the languages of Jewish culture, and thought about why the Jewish people might want their own language. We saw that both Yiddish and Hebrew use the same alphabet, but listening to a song in each language proved that they sound very different. We said that modern Hebrew happened “on purpose,” while Yiddish is a combination of languages that happened gradually and without trying. To explore how this could be, we played a game of “Telephone.” Sarah helped us review (in song!) the Hebrew alphabet and some Sukkot vocabulary words. She also shared a beautiful Yiddish lullabye with us. After music time, we learned about Sukkot and built our very own edible sukkas, using graham crackers and harvest-themed candy. To wrap up the class, the Middles joined the other JCS groups in making harvest garlands to decorate the sukkah. Several Middles students had a great time hanging their harvest garlands on the Sukkah at the Sukkot party following the program.

Little's Class Summary--September 22, 2013

Welcome back to Or Emet JCS! Our first week back was exceptional; there were so many new faces! We learned a brand new song with Mrs. Sarah, we learned the word “shalom,” and we discussed Sukkot. We read a Rosh Hashanah story, and topped the day off by making leaf garlands and playing outside. We are all excited for this new year.

Juniors Class Summary--May 19,

2013

During the May JCS session, Juniors class students joined in a school-wide Israeli dance program and then took part in classroom activities to celebrate and reflect on the year's learning. The dance program, led by visiting specialist Shira Schwartz, gave students and adults the opportunity to "travel through Israel" through an interactive combination of singing, dancing, and theater. After a short break, Juniors gathered with the students from other classes in the Middles classroom to review the aleph-bet and "Zum Gali Gali" along with Sarah. Then the Juniors moved to their regular classroom to sign "JCS yearbooks," autographing and writing messages on the covers of each other's packets of music/Hebrew sheets from the past year's lessons. After "yearbook signing," "Jewish History Wax Museum" presentations began. Based on their independent research, students took turns presenting in the characters of Jewish historical figures from the "middle period" in Jewish history that formed the focus of their study this year. Finally, the class returned to the gym to watch Kulanu, Shira Schwartz's intergenerational dance group, perform for the congregation. Thanks, Juniors students, for making this a year filled with learning and fun!

Middles Class Summary--May 19, 2013

The JCS Middles class had a great time joining in the Israeli dance program at the May session. After dancing, we joined the other JCS classes for music and Hebrew. We learned to sing the Hebrew alphabet. In class, we worked in small groups to create a poster, skit, or other project about something we learned this year. We shared our projects with each other to review everything we learned.

Little's Class Summary--May 19, 2013

The Little's had lots of fun dancing with Shira Schwartz! After dancing, we sang the Hebrew alphabet song and "Zum Gali Gali" with Sarah and the other classes, and did some end-of-the-year activities in our classroom. At the end of class, we went back to the gym and watched Shira perform with her Israeli dance group. It was a fun end to a fun year!

Juniors Class Summary--April 21, 2013

In April, students in the Juniors class focused on learning about different Jewish spiritual/intellectual movements that emerged between the Inquisition and the late 18th century. After discussing Baruch Spinoza's life and ideas a bit further, the class reviewed some basic Hebrew with Sarah and learned to sing "Waters of Babylon" in a round. Afterward, students worked with partners to complete a worksheet that reinforced and developed their knowledge of Jewish history between 1492 and 1789 CE. Then the class took a short break and, after returning, students split into small groups to read stories connected to four of the main Jewish intellectual/spiritual movements to emerge between 1492 and 1789—Kabbalah/mysticism, messianism, Hasidism, and the Haskalah. They considered what each story taught them about the movement it represented, and discussed the pluses and minuses of each movement/belief system. Finally, after looking at some early modern Jewish political cartoons and propaganda art, students imagined that they, too, were alive during this era and created posters to either promote or discredit their respective movement in the eyes of other Jewish people of the time period.

Middles Class Summary--April 21, 2013

In April, the Middles class prepared for Tot Shabbat by learning about Shabbat traditions that some Jewish families observe. We did our own candle lighting ceremony to welcome Shabbat. After talking about what happens and doesn't happen on Shabbat in traditional Jewish homes, we played a sorting game to help us remember. We also played "Shabbat Tag" (like freeze tag). Sarah taught us a song and some Hebrew words related to Shabbat. Sometimes it's hard to live without most technology the way some Jewish families do on Shabbat, so the Middles read a story about connecting to nature instead of always having "screen time." A charades-like game called Not A Stick gave students a chance to have fun without technology. We closed with our own Havdalah ceremony.
