

JCS Class Summaries--January 11, 2015

Littles

This week at Or Emet's JCS we welcomed some visitors (that we will hopefully see again). We learned about Tikkun Olam, read a story about tzedakah, drew pictures of different ways we can help one another, and had a great discussion about what we drew!

Middles

In January, the Middles class learned about Social Justice – an important value for many Humanistic Jews! Sarah led us in a beautiful song on this theme. We learned the story of Prophet Amos, who fought for social justice way back in the time of the Torah. Then we played some games to remind us why equality is important. We finished up by drawing our “inside” and “outside” selves, to show that the inside is what really counts!

Juniors

Because Eva Cohen (that's me—hi, everyone! ☺) was out of town attending a wedding, the Juniors class had Eva's dad, Barry, as a substitute in January; Barry did a great job with the day's lesson, getting the class to think critically and humanistically about Exodus and Leviticus. Continuing to use *Sedra Scenes* as their core text, students split into groups and did dramatic readings of skits for the final Torah portions in Exodus and of skits for selected Torah portions in Leviticus. After each reading, students took part in small group or class-wide discussion, debating thorny issues raised by their reading—including whether “An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth” is a good rule for societies to live by. Hands-on activities broke up the reading; after learning about the Torah's instructions for building a Tabernacle for “God” to dwell in, students created mini Tabernacle models using Tinkertoys, Lincoln Logs, Duplos, and craft supplies. Sarah Berman-Young taught the class some Torah story-focused Debbie Friedman songs after break, and then students played “The ‘Kosher or Treyf’ Game!” Divided into two teams and racing the clock, students used their reasoning skills and lists of kosher rules drawn from the Shemini Torah portion in Leviticus (as well as from

elsewhere in the Torah) to sort images of food and animals into “kosher” and “treyf” piles. Then the class reflected on the origins of kosher rules, and modern efforts to expand the definition of kosher to require ethical treatment of farm and food workers. Finally, before wrapping up for the day, the class discussed the following powerful line: “You shall not stand by your neighbor’s blood” (Leviticus 19:16), thinking about its connection to #BlackLivesMatter and talking about ways that Jewish people can get involved in this important contemporary movement. The Juniors certainly had an eventful and learning-packed lesson!