

9.1 Teachers create a culture of inquiry in the classroom. This cycle involves dialogue, reflections, investigations and action.

(Below is a piece of documentation from Hanukkah)

There are many directions a class can go when introducing Hanukkah. One BIG IDEA is "light." In a class meeting, children were careful observers of two burning candles and then they shared what they saw. Here is what they said:

Bluma- One's bigger, one's smaller.

Talia- One's touching the candle and one's not.

Ari- Around it, it looks like the fire is around it.

Mia- The smell is really good.

Hannah- Because the little one has a little light. The big one has even bigger light.

Ethan- The outside of the candle is shiny.

Ari- The way that the candles...one of them is melting a little bit.

Lexi- It looks kinda like a monster.

Reid- One's melting, one's not.

Liora- It's shining so bright.

Zeke- It looks like it's shiny inside.

Talia- Because there's a few lights on you can only see a little light.

Alexander- There's yellow around it which is gold.

Matthew- It's lighting up a little bit.

Mia- There's white.

Liora- When the light comes down it turns blue.

Sylvia- There's a little crack in the candle.

The next provocation was to put the two burning candles on a table along with shiny paints and fine brushes. The operative word was "responsibility." They were very cautious as they reached for the colors they needed and passed them to one another. Children were encouraged to watch the candles burning and to paint what they saw. Some painted just the flame while others took it to the next level by painting menorahs with burning candles. They all perceived the burning candles differently and their art confirms that.



D'rash (Interpretation, Inquiry, Dialogue) - This experience have brought the children to discuss their observation of the candles and the light. Each one of them interpreted their observations differently through painting.

9.2 Teachers make Jewish learning foundational by exploring ideas, values, symbols, stories and practices embedded in the JECEI lenses.

In order to make the story of Purim preschool-appropriate and to provide the children an opportunity to understand the meaning behind it, we use a short, rhyming version of the Purim story that highlights the key ideas, such as things not being as they seem and standing up for yourself and what you believe is right. The children take turns playing the roles of the main characters of the story, King Ahasuerus, Queen Ester, Haman and Mordecai, while the other children act as the audience. By acting out the story we believe they will remember the story for years to come and will find joy in learning more details of the story as they grow older



D'rash (interpretation, inquiry, dialogue) - During this experience children are provided an interpretation of the Purim story that they can relate to and actively engage in performing.



- 9.4 Teachers co-create learning experiences with children that connect ideas in Torah and Jewish sources to daily classroom experiences.
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Class Journal 1-27-09

Tu B'Shevat is a Jewish holiday celebrating the "birthday" of trees. On this holiday many people plant trees or collect money to plant trees in Israel. When a tree is planted on Tu B'Shevat, every following Tu B'Shevat can be used to calculate the age of a tree so as to know when it is acceptable to harvest the fruit. The Torah states that fruit of trees may not be eaten during the first three years and the fourth year's fruit is for G-d. After the fourth year the fruit is for us to enjoy.

The past week the Gimel children have been involved in many Tu B'Shevat experiences. Last week they used different books about trees as inspiration to draw their own tree, using colored pencils as the medium. They were careful in their work and drew with detail. Later each child wrote a tree poem highlighting personal experiences and thoughts about trees. They are currently posted just inside the classroom door to the right.



- 9.5 Teachers explore with children and families the why, as well as the how and what, of Jewish symbols and practices.



We begin each Monday morning in Gimel with Havdallah. Children rotate the jobs of passing the spices, the wine and the candle. Each time we talk about what each item symbolizes and why we celebrate Havdallah. They have learned that the candle symbolizes the light of Shabbat, the spices are for smelling the sweetness of Shabbat and the welcoming of a new week, and the wine symbolizes the joy of Shabbat. At the end we extinguish the light of the candle into the wine as a symbol for saying goodbye to Shabbat and hello to a new week. Last but not least, we also acknowledge with the children that we would traditionally celebrate Havdallah on Saturday when the first 3 stars are up in the sky and Shabbat has officially ended, but since we are not here, we do this ritual each Monday.

K'dushah (holiness, intentionality, presence)- As we celebrate Havdallah each week, we are separating the work week or what is considered to be ordinary or mundane from Shabbat, a holy time in which is rest and spend time with our loved ones.



9.6 Teachers dialogue with children and families about Jewish life.



Often during Gimel Shabbat, Inbal shares her memories of celebrating Shabbat as a child with her family in Israel. For example, she tells how her grandfather, a rabbi, would return from the synagogue and all the grandchildren would gather around for a blessing from him. Or she describes the smell of her grandmother's Shabbat cooking. It brings a true sense of what it means to be a Jew on Shabbat.

Still need  
to add words  
of kids/  
families

9.7 Teachers utilize Jewish sources, materials, artifacts, symbols, food and music and Hebrew to deepen children's learning experiences.

Below is a piece of documentation from Rosh Hashanah. We shared the pomegranate during a class meeting so the children could have a hands-on experience of seeing the inside of the fruit, which is an important symbol of the holiday.

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## Pomegranates at Rosh Hashanah

Some believe that pomegranates contain 613 seeds, the same number commandments or "mitzvot" in the d'rash. Before eating the pomegranate, we recite: "May it be your will...that our merits be increased like (the seeds of) the pomegranate."



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- 9.8 Teachers utilize art and nature experiences with children to explore and interpret ideas and feelings.
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Class Journal 4-22-09

In honor of Earth Day we thought it fit to allow the children to experience nature and interpret it through art. In small groups of 6-8, they brought clipboards and watercolor materials to the path leading to the Mormon Church parking lot to paint what they notice around them. They first shared their observations with each other and then began to paint. Many drew the wild flowers while some focused on the grasses and bugs crawling around. With all the variety, the purpose was the same. Each child was thoughtful about their work and it gave them the opportunity to really stop and simply notice the beauty around them.



9.9 Teachers share with families and colleagues evidence of the lenses into all aspects of teaching and learning.

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Gimel Journal 9-22-09

A wonderful idea was brought to our attention by Frida and her mom, Christa. Every Friday we are sending the challah that the children make home in a plastic bag. With Tikkun Olam (Repairing the World) in mind, they showed us a small handkerchief size cloth decorated by Frida last year at Southern Marin. They were used each week to wrap the challahs and then the children returned them to the classroom after the weekend.

Today each child painted their own wrap to be used for the same purpose with Gina. We are asking for your cooperation in helping your child return it to a basket every Monday. We recommend that you put it in their lunch box that morning and we will ensure that the children take care of this responsibility from there. We hope this will be a successful way to eliminate some waste in our classroom.

As it says in "Pirkei Avot- The Ethics of Our Fathers and Mothers":

"[Ben Azzai] was accustomed to say: Do not be scornful of any person and to not be disdainful of anything, for you have no person without his hour, and you have no thing without its place."

(Chapter 4, Mishna 3)

It is our time and place as a community to take action and to make a difference where we can. Thank you, as always, for your cooperation.

