

KESHARIM: A JEWISH CULTURAL PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN

General Weekday Curriculum

P.O. Box 77577
RPO Sheppard Plaza
Toronto, Ontario
M3H 6A7

CONGREGATION **Darchei Noam** 

A vibrant, egalitarian and inclusive community

www.darcheinoam.on.ca

Phone:(416) 638-4783

Fax:(416) 638-5852

Why a Cultural Program?

Today, there are more options for Jewish Education than ever before. There have never been as many Hebrew readers and Hebrew speakers as there are today. Yet, very few of us understand it. Words like “tradition” and “culture” are used so often that it is often difficult to associate meaning with them. Whose culture – Jews from Poland, Morocco or Yemen? Whose tradition – which point on the spectrum from which movement?

The *Kesharim* Cultural Program at Darchei Noam offers children a way to face these challenges by building connections to our past and present. Through studies in modern Hebrew and our collective past, participants will develop a true feeling of *Klal Yisra'el*: the unity of Israel.

Mah Nishtana?

How is this different than a Sunday program?

The *Kesharim* program runs independently of our Sunday Hebrew program. Although we recommend that children sign up for both, it is not required. The goals of the Sunday program are to enable our students to integrate into synagogue and Jewish ritual life. This includes celebrations for Shabbat, Holy Days and life cycle events like Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The Sunday program provides a basic background in Torah Values, Celebrations & Commemorations, Social Action, Israel and Prayer Readiness. *Kesharim* adds depth to these areas of study by structuring its program around modern Hebrew, Our National Journeys, and family genealogies. Although the *Kesharim* program stands alone, it is designed to enrich and enhance the children’s Sunday experiences.

Kesharim is informal in style and is divided into two components. “Ivrit: Our Common Tongue” is a study of our contemporary connection to Jews around the world through modern Hebrew, and “Nesi’ot: Our National Journeys” is a study of our historical connection to Jews around the world. We use drama, visual arts and active learning to lift our Jewish connections out of a traditional classroom setting and bring them to life. Each class also engages in projects that are aimed at fostering connections to Jews in Israel and elsewhere.

Kesharim is offered on Wednesday afternoons from 5:00pm to 7:00pm to children in Grades Three through Six.

Ivrit: Our Common Tongue

Throughout most of our history, Hebrew was the language of prayer and study. Its mastery was limited to academics, rabbis and scholars. Today, it is a living language that is spoken by millions of people. A Jew can go to any community in the world, visit any synagogue, and find someone who speaks Hebrew. It truly is our lingua franca – our common tongue.

Language is a strong unifying force for the Jewish people, so a basic understanding of its forms and vocabulary will enable our students to build connections with Jewish communities around the world. The *Kesharim* program focuses on communication skills and active learning; as such, there is less of an emphasis more traditional modes of classroom-based learning. Our style is based on some of the techniques currently being used in ESL/EFL environments.

By the end of Grade Six, our students will:

- know hundreds of basic vocabulary words related to everyday life;
- know how to use the interrogative forms;
- be able to use simple responses to basic questions;
- be able to carry on simple conversations in Hebrew.

Textbooks:

Daber Ivrit Units 1 through 8, Torah Aura Productions.

Nesi'ot: Our National Journeys

Judaism is a wide spectrum of beliefs and traditions. No matter where we choose to place ourselves on that spectrum, we are all connected. Insular Chasidic communities and outgoing liberal communities may appear to have very little in common, but they in fact share a proud legacy. By exploring this legacy, our students will develop a sense of inter-connectedness with Jews in Canada, Israel and around the world.

Our history is rife with journeys. Abraham and Sarah journey from Ur to Canaan, the arrival in Egypt and the Exodus that followed, the Exile to Babylonia, and the scattering of the Diaspora are just a few examples. By studying these journeys, our students will answer certain fundamental questions: if Israel is our homeland, how did we end up scattered all over the world? What kind of connection does this shared history give us?

By the end of Grade Six, our students will be able to:

- distinguish between Ashkenazi, Sephardi and Mizrahi Jews and note similarities;
- understand the inter-connectedness of the global Jewish community by exploring and sharing their family journeys to Canada;
- understand the significance of Jewish history and the role it plays in the decisions we make today as Jews;
- see Judaism as a fluid culture that survives and thrives through the process of revision and reconstruction.

Textbooks:

Torah and You, Ktav Publishing.

Prophets, Writings and You, Ktav Publishing

Atlas of Great Jewish Communities, Behrman House

The Cardinal's Snuffbox, UAHC Press

Mah La'asot unit 3, Torah Aura Productions