

7-12 CURRICULUM OUTLINE

Temple Rodef Shalom Religious School leads the way in teen engagement, identity development and community building. Research has proven that the teen years are the most formative in determining adult Jewish identity and practice. Our program:



- ✧ informs daily life
- ✧ fosters personal connection to class material
- ✧ emphasizes Jewish values along with core topics
- ✧ includes retreat programming and experiential learning
- ✧ offers elective choices and/or our *Soul Searching* group mentoring program
- ✧ encourages social interaction and connection to Jewish community

Grades 7-10 meet on Sunday evening (5:30-7:30 pm). Grades 11 and 12 meet twice each month on Sunday evening.

Sunday Evening Core Curriculum

Our Sunday program is founded on our core curriculum for each grade, supplemented by a variety of elective class options, field trips, retreats, and special programming. The school year is divided into trimesters:

7th grade Class Schedule - Sundays

Trimester 1	Trimester 2	Trimester 3
History of the Holocaust	The Post-Holocaust Experience, Pt. 1	The Post-Holocaust Experience, Pt. 2
Elective	Elective	Elective

8th & 9th grade Class Schedule - Sundays

Trimester 1	Trimester 2	Trimester 3
8 th : Comparative Judaism 9 th : Mussar & Soul Searching	8 th : Comparative Religions 9 th : Modern Israel, Pt. 1	8 th : Israel and the Palestinians 9 th : Modern Israel, Pt. 2
Elective	Elective	Elective

What is Mussar? What is Soul Searching?

Greg Marcus, author of the book, *The Spiritual Practice of Good Actions*, describes Mussar as "...a practice that gives concrete instructions and guidelines to help you live a meaningful and ethical life." Students have the opportunity to delve Jewish spirituality as it pertains to ethics, mindfulness, and living with kavanah (intention). Each week focuses on a different character trait, such as truth, patience, humility, and others. Students are asked to think about their own personalities and where on a scale each trait lands. Soul Searching is a personal sharing and relationship-building experience which supports Jewish teens as they explore the connections between Jewish self, family, and community, and living a life of meaning and purpose.

The content of Soul Searching is largely student directed. Students are invited to raise topics which are of interest to them, and to share their own personal views and experiences. Soul Searching topics have included:

- Jewish beliefs and practices
- Students' personal "Jewish Journeys"
- Current events and issues in our culture

10th grade/Confirmation

Our Sunday, 10th graders have a special curriculum designed for group and personal reflection on what it means to live Jewishly as a young adult. Confirmation is a time when students are able to integrate past learning into a new, mature understanding of who they are as Jews. The year culminates in a student led worship service and ceremony. Throughout the school year, students engage in three discussion-based classes:

- **Hot Topics:** Examines hot-button issues in our society from a variety of Jewish perspectives. Topics include but are not limited to: abortion, euthanasia, animal experimentation, capital punishment, school violence and sexual ethics.
- **Really, Rabbi?** An introduction to rabbinic literature including midrash and Talmud. Students explore how the texts were created and in what ways they are still relevant to their own lives in the 21st century.
- **Oh My God!** Students explore a wide variety of Jewish ideas and beliefs about God, and begin to develop their own personal theologies.

10th graders also experience an exciting three-day class trip to New York, lead the Confirmation service and ceremony, and serve as madrichim (teen aides) in our Religious School. Additionally, the 10th grade year provides students the opportunity to further their relationship with our clergy, who participate and facilitate classroom discussion throughout the year.

Over the summer, 10th grade students meet in small groups with Marcy Spiro (lead teacher). At these meetings, Ms. Spiro will get to know the students and share more information about the confirmation program.

11th/12th Grades

Our 11th and 12th grade students meet on two Sunday evenings per month, from 5:30 – 7:30 pm. Their curriculum is largely student-driven, but also includes lessons from the URJ's "Packing for College" curriculum: (<http://urj.org/learning/teacheducate/adolescents/packingforcollege/>).

Alternative N'tivot Program – Hineni

We are entering the second year of our incredible alternative program called **Hineni**, which means 'Here I am!' The Hineni program will allow students to continue along their individual Jewish Journey and receive an education equivalent to the Sunday Core N'tivot program.

What is Hineni?

Hineni is an alternative program for 7th-10th grade students who are unable to attend the Sunday Core N'tivot program. We believe that both our Sunday Core N'tivot program and our new Hineni program will help teens experience joy in Jewish learning and living, take pride in being Jewish, and develop the skills they need to take an active role in Jewish life.

Why enroll in Hineni?

- Any student may participate in Hineni to enhance their connection to the TRS community.
- A student might have an extra-curricular activity or other commitment at the same time as the Sunday Core N'tivot program. A student will be able to enroll in the Hineni program temporarily and then re-join the Sunday Core N'tivot program.
- A student may participate in Hineni if they have difficulty learning in large groups or have special educational needs.

How does Hineni work?

- Students must be enrolled in Religious School. Hineni is an option for rising 7th-10th Graders.
- Each student is assigned an adult mentor:
 - The student will meet with the adult mentor to develop an individualized, unique program plan.
 - The adult mentor will help the student identify experiences/activities for the student that are tailored to his/her interests, schedule and needs.
 - The student will connect with his/her adult mentor to share and process their experiences throughout the year. We recommend that students meet with their mentor in person at least three times during the year, and schedule monthly check-ins by phone or email.
- Students will choose experiences and/or activities from four core Jewish values: Torah (learning), Avodah (worship), G'milut Chasadim/Mitzvot (acts of loving kindness/mitzvah projects), and Kehillah (social/community).

N'tivot Trips

In addition to their weekly class sessions, N'tivot students participate in special field trips and trips for the entire grade level:

- **7th Grade:** Trip to Calleva Ropes Course, field trip to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Shul-in
- **8th and 9th Grades:** Shul-in
- **10th Grade:** Three-day New York City trip
- **11th/12th Grades:** L'taken Social Justice Seminar or three-day Jewish South Trip (alternating years)