

For this last year of JDS we had our three terrific students; Sam, Lincoln and Teddy. All three boys did an excellent job in class. Each participated in discussions and working on learning basic prayers and the accompanying choreography. We discussed the meaning of the choreography so they understood it's significance in the context of prayer. We also discussed the meanings of the prayers and learned the associated vocabulary. This builds context, familiarity with the material and shows relevance to the placement in the service.

I also created a game for them to teach who the Patriarchs and Matriarchs are, and how they are related to one another. The kids caught on very quickly and enjoyed the lessons.

Over the course of last year and this year I taught sessions (with custom powerpoint presentations that I created) about Jewish communities around the world. In total, we "visited" 10 different countries. Greece was our last excursion. Overall, I believe that the boys enjoyed these mini sessions of learning. Lincoln and Teddy both contributed to the countries visited by each doing research for a different country and providing me that information. I then converted the information into a full presentation for the class. These classes were very enjoyable. We were able to discuss many different topics related to these countries and how Jewish life is in these places. We would circle back through previous discussions and do a compare and contrast to see how religious practices, social customs, cultural assimilation of local cuisine into kosher cuisine, occupations and life cycle events were observed in each community.

Rabbi Shemtov spent countless hours teaching Torah Trope, liturgy, Israel through the use of Israelink and many other topics, all while performing her regular duties and also preparing Sam for his Bar Mitzvah. Sam would then come and be a mini-madrish (student teacher) by helping Teddy and Lincoln practice the text of the V'Ahavtah and Avot and Imahot.

This last year we also studied Pirke Avot, the sayings of our Ancestors. This is an important text that has been the focus of study for many generations. The book we used was printed in graphic novel style which made the discussions interesting, lively and fast paced as our boys are sharp and fast readers.

The many discussions that sprang from this text were interesting and whether the kids realized it or not, deeply philosophical.

And last but not least. As a class of just three students, we raised funds to help support Magen David Adom and RamBam Hospital in Israel at a time when help is desperately needed. I believe they raised approximately \$1800 or so in total. This was their group mitzvah project for the last two years. We learned about each organization and discussed how they operate and help all the people in need. We should be proud of these students for their compassion and interest in helping others.

It has been a pleasure for me to teach AND learn with the kids.

A big thank you to Rabbi Shemtov for being an amazing mentor for me. And thank you to all of the parents who have entrusted me with teaching Jewish life and it's meaning and relevance to who we are today as Jews to their kids. It has been a joy for me and a wonderful excuse to learn new things.