

**I. Between Persons: A Life Guided by Jewish Values**

Showing that their life is informed by Jewish ethical values in the way in which they relate to others. A life informed by Jewish ethical values includes:

1. An awareness that Jewish values are grounded in a sense of commandment, the uncovering of an external source of truth emanating from God and sanctified by the Jewish people's ongoing work at understanding what God wants of us.
2. Making decisions in their ethical life informed by such Jewish values as:
  - Tzedakah - giving to make the world a more just place
  - Kibud av va'aim - honoring parents
  - Lashon ha'ra - refraining from hurting others through speech
  - G'milut hesed - acts of loving kindness
  - Emet - truth telling
  - Tikun olam - mending the world
  - K'lal Yisrael - identifying with the Jewish people
  - Ahavat habriyot - a loving concern for others
  - B'kur holim - visiting the sick
  - Limud Torah - Jewish learning
  - B'tzelem Elohim - All humans are created in the Divine image
3. Having an active Hebrew vocabulary of some thirty-six Jewish value concepts (see #2 above for examples) which they will apply appropriately to situations. Such value concepts will inform their actions.
4. Understanding that to decide what is right takes thought and knowledge.
5. Understanding that doing what is right can take inner-courage.
6. Knowing that doing what is right, though sometimes difficult, can be a source of great satisfaction.
7. Desiring to do what is right and doing it.
8. The study of selections of TaNaKH and rabbinic literature that embody value concepts and the Jewish people's dialogue through the generations to determine how they should be applied.
9. Participating in tikun olam and g'milut hesed for Jews and non-Jews.

## **II. Between Jews and God**

Understanding that Judaism requires sacred deeds, mitzvot, in relationships between persons (see above) and in relationship to God. Students should acquire an awareness that mitzvot are commandments and while in Conservative Judaism there are different ways to interpret this (understandings of revelation), Conservative Judaism holds that we have obligations as Jews. In the realm between a Jew and God, living as a Jew includes:

1. Knowing and experiencing the meaning of specific mitzvot and committing oneself to their practice. (Since growing Jewishly is a process, this includes having an attitude that the choice is not between all or nothing but growing and not growing Jewishly and may mean the partial doing of some mitzvot.)

Examples of growing Jewishly in the observance of Shabbat are

- lighting candles,
- saying kiddush,
- or refraining from prohibited work:

in the observance of kashrut they are

- not eating Biblically prohibited foods,
- eating meat only in Kosher restaurants,
- eating only dairy and parve out,
- or keeping Kosher at home.

2. Knowing and experiencing specific mitzvot includes:
  - a. Knowing about the Jewish holidays and how to observe them.
  - b. Knowing about Shabbat and how to observe it.
  - c. Knowing about Kashrut and how to observe it.
  - d. Knowing how Jews practice life cycle events
3. Understanding the role of halakhah in defining the contours of mitzvot.
4. Knowing several examples of how the Conservative Movement interprets halakhah.
5. Being able to articulate some of the values imbedded in specific mitzvot and in the clusters of mitzvot that constitute such observances as Shabbat, holidays, and kashrut.
6. Being able to articulate the importance of mitzvot in Judaism.
7. Developing a personal relationship with God.
8. Understanding the rationales that have been developed for various mitzvot.

9. Knowing what Judaism shares with and how Judaism differs from other religions.

### **III. Torah Study**

Having a basic knowledge of Torah includes:

1. Knowing the major events in the Biblical narrative from Genesis at least through the entry into Israel.
2. Knowing some prophetic writings and sections from k'tuvim and having a general awareness of what is included in TaNaKH.
3. Being able to read in English and interpret the meaning of Biblical selections which they have learned and some they have not previously learned.
4. Knowing these three/four central Biblical ideas and being able to articulate why they are important in Judaism:
  - Brit (Covenant)
  - Tzedek (Justice)
  - Am Kadosh (A Holy People)
  - Revelation
5. Being able to offer several examples of how Biblical ideas, values, imperatives have been interpreted during the course of Jewish history and being aware of how the Conservative Movement continues this process.
6. Understanding that the broad meaning of Torah is the Jewish people's struggle from Biblical times to the present to understand what God wants of us.
7. Knowing the Biblical and Rabbinic grounding for Holy Days and Life Cycle.
8. Discovering that Torah can be a source of meaning in their personal lives.
9. Having an appreciation of the Bible as the central and sacred text of Judaism and its central importance to the Western world.
10. Knowing various ways that the Bible and subsequent Judaism understands God, humans and the world and locating oneself vis-à-vis these understandings.
11. Studying in English translation selections from Torah, Neviim and Ketuvim.

12. Knowing some contemporary attempts to understand and make Torah meaningful.

#### **IV. Knowledge of Hebrew**

Having a basic knowledge of Hebrew includes:

1. Being able to read major sections of the prayers of the Shabbat, weekday, and holidays with fluency.
2. Knowing the basic vocabulary of the prayer book and understanding the Hebrew of frequently used prayers.
3. Having an active facility with 36 Hebrew value concepts and knowing the meaning of an additional 36 Hebrew value concepts.
4. Knowing that the Torah is written in Hebrew and its meaning is best understood if you know the Hebrew.
5. Being aware that Hebrew is the language of Israel and the language of the Jewish people past and present.
6. As part of the process of becoming aware that Hebrew is a spoken language and as a means of attuning ear and eye to comprehension, students will be introduced in the early years (K-4) to:
  - simple Hebrew conversations and stories
  - participation in simple Hebrew dialogues

#### **V. Knowing prayer and praying**

Knowing prayer and praying includes:

1. Becoming aware in oneself of a sense of wonder, amazement, place in the world, and being in God's presence.
2. Having the knowledge and skills to participate in Shabbat, holiday, and weekday services.
3. Having a sufficient Hebrew vocabulary to understand, with the help of a translation, major sections of the liturgy.
4. Being able to interpret prayers, search for personal meaning through the prayers, and to relate personally to some prayers.
5. Being aware of changes the Conservative Movement has made in our liturgy and why.

6. Being able to participate in services in accordance with one's ability up to and including:
  - being able to lead Shabbat and weekday services
  - the mastery of Torah and Haftorah trope.
7. Being able to express oneself through spontaneous prayer and through the siddur.
8. Exploring the role of regularly praying. Examples of students exploring the role of regular prayer in their lives:
  - a) Praying daily
  - b) Attending synagogue on Shabbat
  - c) Saying the Shema daily
  - d) Saying Hamotzi at each meal
  - e) Saying Birkat HaMazon at each meal

### **VI. Knowledge About and Concern for Israel**

Having knowledge about and concern for Israel includes:

1. A familiarity with the importance of Israel in the TaNaKH (Bible) and tefillah (prayer).
2. Knowledge that Jews have lived in and identified with the land of Israel for four thousand years.
3. An awareness of the commitments expressed in establishing the State of Israel and sense of the drama of establishing the State.
  - This includes some key events in modern Israel's history before and since the establishment of the State
  - This includes some knowledge of present-day Israel
4. Having a continuing interest in Israel.
5. Being concerned for the State of Israel.
6. Understanding the importance of the State of Israel and being able to articulate reasons for concern and support.
7. Having an awareness that aliyah is an option in the lives of Jews in North American and elsewhere.
8. Showing a desire to visit Israel.

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9. Having an understanding of the political system in Israel and being able to interpret news from Israel in the light of that knowledge.

### **VII. An identity with and concern for K'lal Yisrael (the Jewish People)**

Identifying with and being concerned for K'lal Yisrael (the Jewish People) includes:

1. Viewing one's past, present and future as part of the Jewish past, present and future. (This includes historical moments of cultural and social expression. It also includes the Sho'ah but should not be limited to it.)
2. Sensing a shared common history and spiritual legacy with other contemporary Jews.
3. Understanding that to be a Jew is to be part of the extended Jewish family. (In this, it differs from only being part of a religious fellowship.)
4. Appreciating that Jews throughout the world are responsible for one another and demonstrating through their actions a commitment to the imperative, "All Jews are responsible for each other."
5. Participating in acts of tzedakah concerned with the physical and spiritual survival of other Jews.
6. Participating in political action on behalf of the well-being of Jews.
7. Respecting other Jews who understand Judaism differently and having some basic ideas about the differences between Conservative Judaism and other Movements.
8. Understanding the importance of in-marriage in continuing and strengthening the Jewish people and its values.

### **VIII. Conservative Judaism**

Having a basic understanding of what it is to be a Conservative Jew includes:

1. Knowing examples of how the Conservative Movement continues the process of interpreting Jewish ideas, values and halakhot (laws).
2. Knowing specific changes the Conservative Movement has made in liturgy and the reasons why.
3. Knowing about innovations made to enhance Jewish living by the students' own and other Conservative congregations.

## **Aims Statement on Conservative Synagogue Schools**

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4. Knowing Conservative Jewish: Personalities, Institutions Actions taken as a Movement, Ways undertaken to enhance the Jewish lives of its members and others
5. Knowing about the Masorti (Conservative) Movement in Israel.
6. Developing an ability to engage in thinking about the Conservative Movement's theology as reflected in Emet Ve'emunah (See Teenager's Guide).