



Seattle Jewish Community School  
*Challenging each Mind and Inspiring each Heart*

**3rd Grade/Nitzanim  
Curriculum Overview  
2011-12/5772**

**Teachers**

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## **NITZANIM GENERAL STUDIES**

### **Arrival Time**

Please remember that Nitzanim lessons will start **promptly at 8:30 a.m.**

Education is a path of continued exploration, which will be modeled enthusiastically by us and hopefully, in turn, by each student. Learning is the success each student feels when new challenges are met and overcome. Nitzanim's classroom is an environment that nurtures a love of learning and sets solid foundations. Discovery and questioning are an integral part of the curriculum, along with appropriate vocabulary and skills acquisition. Each student in Nitzanim will feel challenged, yet confident and responsible throughout the learning process. Our curriculum and behavior plans are structured to allow students to share in the responsibility for their own learning and learning environment. This includes their desire for enrichment, behavior parameters and rewards, and becoming more skilled at their own time management. All learning is interconnected, not only in General Studies but also between the Jewish and General Studies' curriculums.

### **Language Arts**

In Language Arts, the *foundation* is the use of literacy tools: decoding, spelling, vocabulary, grammar, figurative language, and other literary elements. These are applied in oral language, listening, reading, and writing (utilizing printing and cursive handwriting, after it is learned). Sentence and paragraph structure, as well as writing conventions, are introduced and practiced in the four types of paragraphs: narrative, descriptive, expository, and persuasive. Oral and reading comprehension is emphasized, with students having opportunities to listen to literature being read aloud, to read aloud to a partner, to use Readers' Theatre or plays, as well as in whole-class reading. Students read both assigned and self-selected literature. They then *broaden their study* by reading, analyzing, and sometimes even producing themselves the many different *genres* of literature classified as *fiction* (stories, fairy tales, fables, folk tales/tall tales, legends/ myths, realistic fiction, historical fiction, mysteries, plays and poetry) and *non-fiction* (journals, magazines, biographies and autobiographies).

### **Math**

Using Everyday Math, concepts and mathematical skills are developed over time and in a wide variety of contexts. Students use multiple methods and strategies for problem solving. The teacher uses *concrete* modeling for a small portion of each unit's instruction, providing a *pathway* for the student's *abstract* understanding. The rest of the hands-on instruction involves students working with partners or in small group activities, as well as individually on the computer. Tools for assessment, differentiation, and intervention are provided within each lesson.

After students have established routines, had a quick review (including assessment), the units covered include: Adding and Subtracting Whole Numbers; Linear Measurement and Area; Multiplication and Division (which includes three units covering facts, estimation, ratios, mental math, algorithms, lattice multiplication, and arrays); Place Value in Whole Numbers and Decimals; and Geometry.

The "language of Math" is analyzed and incorporated throughout this curriculum, and the "Problem of the Week" is given as homework to analyze and apply Math concepts using multiple strategies, as well as to support the communication of mathematical ideas. Further enrichment is given in Math Madness Morning at SJCS. The "*language of Math*" is analyzed and incorporated throughout our curriculum, and the "*Problem of the Week*" is given most weeks to analyze and apply Math concepts learned, as well as to aid in Math communication. Further enrichment will be given, as in *Math Madness Morning* at SJCS.

### **Social Studies**

In third grade Social Studies, the students' understanding of community will provide them with a *foundation* to study other communities and cultures. Vocabulary, map skills, and geography will be part of this foundation to ensure full comprehension. Our first *area of discovery* will be **Seattle**, followed by **Ancient Greece**. A visit to Pike Place Market is planned at the end of our *Seattle* unit. Integrating Language Arts and Social Studies, students in Nitzanim will also be receiving ( weekly) **Time For Kids** news magazine, (monthly) **TFK: Go Places** magazine, as well as having the opportunity to complete a

**passport**, with a **visa** for each country they visited, from the places they have read about online at <http://www.timeforkids.com/TFK/>.

## **Science**

As a *foundation* in Science, students will be introduced to the scientific process in SJCS' Science Lab. Students will also improve their scientific vocabulary, and observational skills and techniques, in order to express or document their findings. Students study *basics* such as land forms, ecology, plant life and animal life, and major units include **Salmon, Rocks and Minerals**, and our **Environment**. Third grade is again planning on a **native plant garden** at our school, and will have a Native Plant Steward speak to the class to help us accomplish this. Third grade also participates in the **Science Fair** this year by writing and presenting biographies of famous scientists. A tour of the **Issaquah Fish Hatchery** and, of course, the yearly trip to my home to view native plants are planned to enrich their science experience. This is **in addition** to the weekly lab time we will have with HaMorah Brooke.

## **What is Inquiry-Based Science?**

Research has shown that the best way for children to learn important science concepts is to actively construct ideas through their own investigations. In the science lab, this means making observations, asking questions, testing ideas, recording results, comparing data, building concepts and explanations.

## **Core Inquiry-Based Science Concepts for All Students:**

Students explore core scientific concepts in the science lab. All students work on being keen observers. This means that they use their senses to observe what they are learning. They look – noticing changes, colors, shapes, and behaviors. They touch – observing the temperature and feeling for texture and consistency. They smell – noticing differences between the materials and noting if there is an odor. They listen – noting how the sound relates to the materials. Then, they use their words to describe what they are observing by writing in their science journals and having discussions with other scientists. Students have been learning how important it is for scientists to record data and their observations in organized ways, using tables, anecdotes and illustrations. They make predictions based on prior knowledge and then compare the results to their predictions. Students learn that scientists use models in order to observe something that cannot be easily seen. In the lab lessons, they learn how to conduct fair tests. This means knowing which variables remain the same (controlled) and which variables are changed (manipulated).

## **Science Lab Unit: Rocks and Minerals**

Most children have picked up a rock or mineral to show their parents or friends. They often collect and sort them. They are fascinated with the colors, sizes and textures of rocks and minerals they find as well as of those they see in museums and rock shops. This natural interest, coupled with the variety of rocks and minerals, leads many children to wonder what these earth materials are made of and how they are formed.

*Rocks and Minerals* is a 16-lesson unit in which students investigate rocks and minerals to answer these and other questions. Students explore the similarities and differences among rocks; they also study how rocks and minerals are both similar and different. They conduct several tests on minerals and develop a systematic way to record their observations. Finally, students apply the information they have collected to identify the minerals they have been studying by name. These activities introduce students to the way geologists study rocks and minerals. They also help students develop and apply process skills in observing, describing, and recording.

## **Technology**

In third grade, the students will focus on learning productive internet search tools. They will use these tools when they work on their biography reports. Furthermore, third grade again has its own **Website** this year, which we will use for web searches, webquests, and to access many "Cool Sites" for learning and enrichment. HaMorah Paulette's weekly *Homework* page, including the *Spelling List*, can also be accessed at this site: <http://home.comcast.net/~doulatshahi1/>.

## Library

The **class library** is available for students to use. We have a comprehensive selection of both fiction and non-fiction books. The children are invited to select and check out two books each. In the classroom, we have a file-card holder where they list the books they've checked out under their first name. We ask that the books be cared for and returned to school, where they cross off their name when done reading. If the book is lost, the student is responsible for replacing the book.

In addition, our students have started visiting the **school library**, and will do so **weekly for a half-hour period**. The students will be able to check out books, learn more about the running of a library, and complete writing projects with haMorah Brooke.

**All of the units in the library curriculum are guided by three main goals:** 1) to instill a love of books and reading, 2) to teach library and research skills, and, 3) to use various forms of literature as a vehicle to explore important personal and social issues such as respect for diversity and social responsibility.

**Review and Expand:** Book care, shelf markers, library sections, and more challenging alphabetizing. To start the year off right, we also read aloud a fun book such as "The Top Ten Ways to Ruin the First Day of School" by Ken Derby.

**Individual Differences:** This unit incorporates the values of *dereh* eretz and honoring diversity in oneself and others, with more academic library learning. Students learn about literary and illustration techniques by reading aloud and discussing picture books about individual differences. For example, we discuss how authors and illustrators use very different approaches to communicate the "moral of the story." We look at the devices that authors and illustrators use to keep the reader engaged in the story. Students also discuss the ways that the stories relate to themselves and their lives.

**Parts of a Book:** After a brief review, this section moves on to include title page, copyright, publisher, glossary, index, table of contents, and how to identify call numbers for all sections of the library.

**References and resources:** This includes how to use the dictionary, encyclopedia, and atlas. We also discuss how to generate topics to research.

**Finding Books:** After a brief review of cover and sections, we move on to title, keywords, card catalogue and the public library online.

## Nitzanim Hebrew/Judaic Curriculum

A Nitzanim student begins the year as a dependent learner, and as developmentally appropriate, becomes an independent learner during the course of the year. S/he is given many different opportunities to explore becoming independent, both during class time and while completing age-appropriate homework assignments. Students use a variety of critical thinking skills to explore our various topics of study, and have many opportunities both to mentor younger students as well as to learn from older buddies as we blend with the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders for *t'fillot* (prayers) and other holiday related activities. It is a year of "stepping up" into the older grades, and a year of great pride and joy associated with his/her many accomplishments.

The academic goals for Nitzanim are to provide competency and independence in Hebrew language, Torah, *t'fillah*, holidays and Israeli history and culture. During the course of the year students will become comfortable reading, writing and praying in Hebrew, while also relating as Jews to the world around them.

## Torah

The Torah unit consists of an in-depth study of the last four *parshiot* (portions) of the book of B'reshit. These chapters encompass the stories of Joseph. While studying this text, students will learn to identify characters, themes, main events and key Hebrew roots within a Biblical text. Students will use this basic knowledge of the text to study and develop commentary and *midrashim* (interpretations and stories)

relating to the text. In addition to studying the Joseph text, students will also participate in discussions and activities relating to the weekly Torah portion.

## Hebrew

We are very excited to be adopting and implementing the curriculum for TaL AM this year. Based on years of research on the principles of language development and learning patterns, this program is nurturing a generation of Jewish children around the world who are literate in the Hebrew language and equipped with the knowledge, skills and commitment they need to live vibrant Jewish lives. This curriculum was developed by a dynamic team of writers and teachers in Montreal and in Israel, led by Covenant Award recipient Tova Shimon. Here is an excerpt from the TaL AM website:

*How does it work?*

*The entire structure of the TaL AM program is based on the notion that the best learning environment for children is one in which knowledge is acquired through a variety of activities, using each of the five senses. In addition to studying from textbooks, students use music, games and visual aids to learn the Hebrew language and to develop a keen understanding of Jewish concepts and values.*

*Students develop their Hebrew and heritage literacy in a gradual and spiraled process, building new ideas and concepts a top an expanding foundation of knowledge.*

*By making the study of Hebrew and Judaism relevant to the children's everyday lives, the program enables them to develop a true appreciation of their heritage and understand the need for continued, lifelong Jewish study.*

## T'fillah (Prayer)

During the first part of the year, students will focus their studies on the Birhot HaShahar, the morning blessings. Emphasis will be placed on the concepts of order in the world and organizing one's day. Students will explore the basic physical level in addition to the deeper moral and social issues. When this unit is completed, we will begin our study of the Sh'ma and the b'rahot (blessings) that follow. We will take a close look at where the Sh'ma fits into each T'fillah service and learn about the history and value of this significant prayer in our liturgy.

## Holidays

An in-depth study of the holidays is structured around the Jewish holiday cycle. Students learn the historical background, rituals, Hebrew terms, b'rahot (blessings), and customs relating to the Jewish holidays. Stories, discussions, related texts, simulated celebrations, and creative activities will be integrated into our curriculum. We will integrate general studies skills such as literature circles, math analysis and science observations as appropriate. **In addition, each student in Nitzanim will have the opportunity to research an assigned topic relating to Shabbat observance to present during their special Kabbalat Shabbat here at school.**

## Resources

*TaL Am materials including CD's, workbooks, library books and more (Tova Shimon)*

*Sh'ma and It's Blessings (Rowe)*

*My Jewish Year (Fisher)*

*Welcome to Israel (Rivlin and Gevirtz)*

## Homework

General Studies homework will be given out on Monday, and is generally due on Wednesday, Friday, and Monday. Nitzanim students will receive Hebrew/Judaic homework twice a week, on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Homework will always have an assigned due date to allow for flexibility at home. In Judaic Studies, the student will generally have a choice: Tuesday homework will be due on Wednesday or Thursday, while Thursday homework will be due on Friday or Monday. In any given week, you will decide what works best for your family. However, please help your child to note the due dates and allow for time to complete each assignment with care.

We will use the following criteria when grading homework and other assignments:

**Timely completion** – The project or assignment should be turned in on time.

**Neatness** – Work should be done neatly, with the name (and heading if necessary) included, along with best handwriting.

**Spelling** – All words should be spelled correctly, in Hebrew and English.

**Punctuation** – Work should be punctuated properly.

**Completeness** – The assignment should meet the requirements and expectations.

**Effort** – Did the student work to the best of his/her ability? Did the student try his/her best?

It is important to remember that third grade is a time of establishing independent work and study habits. If your child is unable to complete a homework assignment independently, that is valuable information for us to have.

Special projects will have a specific grading sheet that will give the categories to be evaluated along with brief explanations so that students will know what is expected of them, and have the information they need to do their best.

*We look forward to a wonderful year of learning with your child! -HaMorah Ameer,  
[asherer@sjcs.net](mailto:asherer@sjcs.net) and HaMorah Paulette, [pdoulatshahi@sjcs.net](mailto:pdoulatshahi@sjcs.net)*

## Art

Students are taught to look at art and, by using the concepts of **Discipline Based Art Education (DBAE)**, *understand* what they see. Their *foundation* will be vocabulary acquisition, along with study in the four main areas of DBAE: aesthetics, art criticism, art history, and finally, art production. Areas of *further exploration* include **Art and the Environment** and **Faith Ringgold**. Third grade completes a **salmon mural** -- each time unique, educational, and beautiful -- at the end of the salmon science unit.

The over-arching goal of the SJCS art program is to provide a broad, multi-media art experience towards developing an understanding of the arts as a universal form of cultural and personal expression. The program offers an introduction to masters of American/European art history as well as non-Western masters, keeping in mind cultural and historical contexts. Students are shown the intrinsic connection between art and the disciplines of math and science especially, and also of literature, and taught that creativity is not the provenance of the arts alone. As an Elementary school topic, the emphasis is to provide a breadth of experience in the art program.

The media used in the SJCS art program are based on the National Arts Standards, and include: drawing, painting, collage, printmaking, ceramics and sculpture. Each grade works on projects designed to build skills, but mostly to provide experiences that create an understanding of process. The creation of art comes from individuals in cultural settings, such as the collages Romare Beardon created in New York City in the Harlem Jazz scene. It comes from needing to solve "problems", such as how to create a clay coil bowl. It requires planning, focused work and completion, in limited time. Each year we discuss the Elements of Art, on levels appropriate to age.

In the fall, Third Graders focus on drawing and painting. They will use a variety of media, including oil pastels, colored pencils, finger paints, watercolors, and tempera. As third graders draw, we talk about the elements of shape, and introduce the idea of perspective. Finger painting becomes slightly more sophisticated; students are required to create representational images after they create secondary and tertiary colors. We will integrate a project with haMorah Ameer in watercolors for Hanukah. Collage touches on mosaics of the Ancient World, which students study with haMorah Paulette. Printmaking expands for the third grader as they are allowed to change ink colors and materials for making plates. Clay, always a favorite, moves into coil construction technique, a challenge they are ready for. Three dimensional sculptures for third graders involve creating Greco-Roman vessels from recycled materials, which takes

multiple class sessions and paper maché. In every class we discuss Elements of Art and/or Principles of Design as they are related to the projects.

## **Music**

### Listening and Appreciation

- revisiting the idea that music tells a story
- revisiting the relationship of size and pitch to major instrumental groups
- increasing repertoire of exposure to classical composers and their work
- revisiting qualities of music, concepts and students' response to music

### Creative Expression and Movement

- creating students' own story as a response to music
- increasing repertoire of folk dances
- developing improvisation in response to patterns with hand percussion and marimbas

### Music Concepts

- extending basic concepts (steady beat, tempo, form, etc.)
- developing notation of rhythms w/ syllabic identifiers and traditional notation
- revisiting note value

### Instrumental Production

- applying notation to hand percussion and marimbas

### Singing

- increasing repertoire of songs
- developing skills to read and follow music
- introducing opportunities to sing in harmony
- providing opportunities to perform

## **Physical Education**

### **Statement of Purpose**

The Seattle Jewish Community School recognizes the need for Physical Education and provides opportunities for students to learn, grow and develop in the areas of movement skills, fitness (energy) education, and teamwork. Paramount to its physical education environment is good sportsmanship through dereh eretz, mutual respect, positive language and proper behavior among students. SJCS provides a safe learning environment and uses a diverse array sports games, tumbling exercises, dance, fitness and other related activities to provide a well-rounded physical education curriculum.

### **Curriculum**

The year begins with the school favorite dodge ball and a variety of tag games as students gleefully practice dodging and fleeing, throwing and catching. We switch to basketball in October and the task of learning the proper techniques of dribbling, passing, and shooting. Three-on-three games are played with timed music controlling team rotation rather than score. Students are challenge to integrate skills learned along with the challenge of teamwork, strategy, and sportsmanship. November brings our soccer unit, and our first fitness installment. Students compete against themselves along an obstacle course made of various calisthenics and other exercises that comprise the SJCS Fitness Challenge.

Students learn how to maintain a volley by serving, setting and hitting the ball over the net during December's volleyball unit. January another fitness installment as well as kickball as students enjoy the game while further developing their kicking, throwing, catching, and base running skills. Instruction is given during the month of February on how to properly throw and catch a football, run effective pass routes or pattern to receive the football. The game "capture the football" is also integrated into these

units as students learn to use strategy to capture the other teams football without getting their own flag snatched.

March brings with it the sound of the "crack of the bat". Students further develop hand/eye coordination, how to field a rolling or flying ball; maintain awareness as they run the base paths alone or with teammates while playing "coach pitch" baseball. In April, students learn to dance, dance, dance! Each year different cultural dances such as Russian, Brazilian, South American, and even African American cultural dances have been taught. During the months of May and June a review of different skills/games/activities taught during each prior month will be conducted each week as well as the finals of the SJCS Fitness Challenge.

Occasionally, we will bring in outside instructors such as Gymnastics, Hula Hoop (Hoop to the Beat), and Circus Arts Games (SANCA) to further augment our curriculum.

### ***SJCS PE Dress for Success Policy***

SJCS welcomes students to its Physical Education Curriculum of exercises and activities. In order for your child to optimize their learning experience and to reduce the embarrassment factor, we request that you pay close attention to your child's PE day(s) and make sure they are dressed appropriately each day.

Each child should wear a pair of athletic shoes. No heels, sandals, crocs, uggs, boots, etc.

Girl appropriate dress would include shorts, skorts, yoga pants, sweats. No dresses or skirts please! It is preferred that boys wear shorts or sweat pants.

Thank you for your understanding, and detailed attention to this matter. We look forward to having another great year of PE at SJCS