



"Congregation Kneseth Israel is not your parents' religious school"

Anyone who attended Hebrew school in the second half of the 20th century remembers long hours of boring "kill and drill" activities. The Rabbi and staff of Congregation Kneseth Israel, Elgin, have been working over the last two years to break away from that model.

According to Rabbi Margaret Frisch-Klein, "I never want a child to hate going to Hebrew School. It should be fun and meaningful at every grade level. We have studied and interviewed leaders in modern Jewish education. Like secular school, we have incorporated technology such as online learning and Skype.

It is no longer necessary for a student to physically sit at the synagogue to study Hebrew. Through a program named Mitkadem, which we have adopted, students can log in at home, complete interactive activities which teach decoding, prayers, and vocabulary. More importantly, it challenges the student to think about the meaning of those prayers in today's world." In the classroom the students receive whole-class, as well as individualized instruction." Students have the option of coming on Wednesday for additional classroom instruction or logging in at home.

The students can progress at their own pace. Education director, Nina Finn said, "We know that students learn in different ways and at different speeds. We feel our curriculum accommodates all students, so that every child is successful."

For the younger students who are not ready for the additional program, CKI has a monthly school-wide family education program called "Judaism Rocks." These are interactive events which incorporate music, art, food, and drama. A theme is used for the entire school year. Last year students created their own Torah. One Sunday as part of a "trip" to Israel, the student body Skyped with an Israeli citizen who works in Israel's high tech industry. They also planted a community garden as part of a "kibbutz," placed prayers in "The Western Wall," and created tiles and mosaics to represent Jerusalem stone.

Congregation Kneseth Israel offers religious school instruction from Pre-school through high school in a coordinated, integrated curriculum. The curriculum for the other Sundays

spirals and includes topics such as holidays, Bible, Jewish values, Jewish history, life cycle, modern Jewish history, the Holocaust, and Israel..

Congregation Kneseth Israel has been the heart of the Jewish community in the Fox River Valley for one hundred and twenty plus years. It believes in life-long learning, meaningful observance, and building community. It also embraces diversity and welcomes all Jews including interfaith families.

Come be a part of something ancient and modern. For more information, contact Nina Finn, Congregation Kneseth Israel, 847-695-7160 or cki@ckielgin.org