

## SUNDAY PROGRAM Schedule and Preferences

First period 9:30

### PIRKEI AVOT – TRADITIONAL TEXTS IN MODERN MEDIA

The only Talmudic that does not deal with laws is titled *Pirkei Avot* (usually translated as *Ethics of the Fathers*). These Talmudic tidbits of moral and ethical insights are most often taught in contemporary film and You-tube media as they depict contemporary dilemmas and choices. We will view selected scenes depicting these truths and then determine their importance for the future of the Jewish community and Western civilization.

### DO-IT-YOURSELF JUDAISM

As you assume responsibility for your connection to a meaningful heritage, we will share some meaningful traditions and now new opportunities to create reflective moments, modern rituals, and ceremonies from birth to death. Some celebrations may include how to celebrate Jewishly earning a driver's license, leaving your parent's home and creating your own ways of observing the Jewish calendar based upon your own transition in status and interests as Jew and citizen. We will examine at both ancient and contemporary rituals and create new ones where gaps may exist. This syllabus will be expanded and focus on the interests of the class.

Second Period 10:20

### PERSPECTIVES ON AMERICAN JUDAISM

While rooted in the stories and objects past generations of Jewish immigrants brought with them, American Judaism has emerged in the 20th century as a multi-pronged enterprise. Students will examine their role in this story from the beginnings of the American Jewish community in 1654 to today. Jews arrived and then migrated to new places and old challenges while holding on to tradition and adapting to new circumstances as they tried to make the world a better place.

### BIOETHICS - CHOOSING BETWEEN TRADITION & CHANGE, TECH & TEXT

"Problems that would cross a Rabbi's eyes," said Fiddler's Tevye. Today we are often asked to choose between 21st century science and Jewish tradition. We live simultaneously in a secular and a Jewish world, making choices and compromises balancing between "Tradition and Change." We will discuss and debate new choices confronting us in a variety of new decisions based on technological innovations that never occurred 2000 years ago.

We will examine emerging scientific discoveries and technologies in a wide variety of genetic engineering, drug research, clean-tech and renewable energy, control of agricultural pests, DNA and nan0-thera[y ], and when does death become final to name a few areas.

We will focus on key differences between secular and Jewish approaches in interpretation, analysis, and application of bioethical concepts – and similarities. Our goal is not to solve these fundamental ethical dilemmas. Rather, we want to prepare ourselves for making informed decisions as Jews and citizens who will continue to be confronted by increasing challenges of modernity and our tradition.

Third Period 11:10 Break

Snack begins and can be taken to class

Fourth Period 11:25

JEWISH FOOD – FACT OR FICTION?

What makes a food Jewish? Is it family tradition or rabbis or cookbooks? This class will explore different aspects of Jewish belief, identity and practice connected to food. Examples include kashrut, learning from our neighbors, the environment, personal diet, and the surrounding culture. We will also prepare food for people in need as a form of “tikkun olam.” Last but certainly not least, we will certainly enjoy some food together.

BETTER TOGETHER (Meets 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the month)

The Jewish tradition teaches that old age is a virtue and a blessing. Better Together is now beginning its fifth year as an intergenerational educational program for Senior Citizens and Teens of the Greater Reading community. Our JCHS school is committed to remaining connected to our Jewish values, affirming the importance of local senior citizens. Students will meet with seniors monthly, studying together and facilitating deep conversation and creating meaningful connections. This course may satisfy local school or youth group goals for community service and involvement. It is also an important item to include on college applications. Open to all grades. Second Sunday monthly, 11:15 AM-12:15 PM on a regular basis as part of the JCHS.

JEWISH WIT – The Jewish History What’s Funny and Why

What does Jewish humor say about the history of our people – where we have lived, the languages we have spoken and the circumstances we survived or enjoyed. That’s our class. Why have there been so many Jewish comedians, philosophers and writers?

Most importantly, what in our Jewish history helps to explain “the humor?” Is tragedy every “funny?” We can share examples and then ask ourselves “why is it funny?” Who would have told such a story, where, under what circumstances and for what reason? What does that humor tell us about those Jews – when they lived and where? Were they poor and desperate and making the best of what they had, or were they wealthy and but living in fear of their neighbors? Do stereotypes come from within the Jewish community, from outside the Jewish community or from both sources? Why and does it matter?

JEWISH WIT – AN HISTORICAL EXPLANATION OF WHY IT IS OR ONCE WAS FUNNY!

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