Dear Colleague,

We are so proud to share with you the Beverly Goldstick Curriculum for 21st Century Jewish Learning.

In 2017, Anshe Emet Synagogue, a Conservative synagogue in urban Chicago with about 1,200 families, engaged in a year and a half process of revisioning congregational education from the ground up. That process, LaAtid, culminated in a clarity of vision for K through 12 education, based on the principles of knowledge, flexibility, diversity, and community. Many big and bold ideas were generated from a combination of 100 interviews with members of our community and 20 different educational institutions which we interviewed across the country for inspiration.

A year later, we decided to begin by building a curriculum. Our goal was to construct a curriculum that spiraled up from JK all the way through 8th grade, with daily outlines of materials and activities. We wanted to provide teachers with everything they would need in order to execute a robust, lively, and engaging educational experience. We know that supplemental school teachers have limited time to prepare materials, and often have content expertise in one subject area but not necessarily across all of them. We are also aware of the unique privilege that AES enjoys in employing four full-time staff members with Masters in Jewish education or the equivalent, and felt that we should lean into that expertise, in order to give teachers everything they need, and help them focus their energies on cultivating relationships in the classroom and bringing the material to life.

The curriculum, which has been developed over the last several years, has been piloted as we go. That means that the version that you are receiving has been executed in multiple classrooms, and edited with feedback from classroom teachers.

The curriculum is consciously designed to be both robust and flexible. So often, supplementary education is deemed to need to make a choice between that which is engaging and that which is sophisticated. We do not believe in that dichotomy. Rather, you will notice very sophisticated topics across all subjects. For example, in sacred text we believe that our sequence enables greater depth and breadth than we had ever seen in the past: JK - 7 days of Creation; SK - Adam & Eve, Noah, & Babel; 1st grade - Avot & Imahot; 2nd grade - Genesis & Exodus overview; 3rd grade - Parsha pshat; 4th grade - Jonah, Esther, & Ruth; 5th grade - Joshua, Deborah/Yael, Samson, & David; 6th grade - Parsha with Commentary; 7th grade - Isaiah, Jeremiah, & Ezekiel; 8th grade - Introduction to Rabbinic Texts.

At the same time, we believe that this curriculum would be useless if it were not flexible. Our design is meant to be modular, and we are conscious that it will need to be adapted from year to year and from school to school. We trust educators to make the decisions they need to adapt to their own environment. For example, parsha and holiday lessons will need to be realigned to the calendar each year. In 6th grade, we teach American Jewish history because that is when our students in public school are exposed to American history; in another city or state, one might choose to move this to a different grade. In 7th grade, we suggest a series of lessons on "shmirat haguf", thinking about how to care for the body, particularly in relation to drugs and alcohol, and we know that not every school will want to include that module. In 2nd grade, the Israel unit focuses on aliyah - understanding that Jewish people in Israel come from all over the globe - however, a particular school might think that their 3rd grade educator is better equipped to teach this and move it to that grade. Certainly, we have made conscious decisions about how we think the topics reinforce one another and how they might be aligned on the calendar, but everything is designed with an à la carte approach, which allows the team of educators to move around the puzzle pieces according to their needs.

Our work in curriculum development began by identifying "outcomes and buckets" across each of 7 subject areas: 1. Sacred Text; 2. Prayer, God, & Spirituality; 3. Jewish Calendar; 4. History; 5. Israel; 6. Mitzvot & Values; and 7. Contemporary Jewish Life (including lifecycle events). Within each of these buckets, we identified the specific content which would be covered in each grade. Those choices were made in order to create a spiral that gets more sophisticated through the years, and in order to increase horizontal alignment (the way in which individual subjects within a year reinforce one another - for example, in 4th grade we learn about the Book of Ruth, the lifecycle event of conversion, and take a deep dive into Shavuot). Within each of those buckets, specific learning outcomes using an understanding by design model were developed for every subject in every grade. Below is a summary of those areas of focus across grades as well as a number of charts and addendums to give you the “balcony view.”

Having developed larger subject area foci and the outcomes therein, we then developed a scope and sequence to map out the specific lesson subtopics and where they would fit on the calendar. That document is below as well.

A few assumptions and features of our curriculum to keep in mind:

- This curriculum is based on Anshe Emet’s current module where JK-2nd is 3 hours per week, 3rd-7th is 5 hours per week, and 8th is 2 hours per week. The curriculum provides lesson plans for up to 25 weeks of school.

- The curriculum is written weekly, not daily. The assumption is that different schools will choose to break up their Sunday versus weekday hours in different ways, and we leave it up to the institution to determine how to distribute the material.
- The curriculum does not remove the responsibility of a teacher to prepare for their teaching. What the curriculum does is provide myriad ideas and suggestions; a teacher will need to take the material and turn it into a lesson plan. Our teachers have found that by engaging with this material, their prep time is shorter and more efficient, but that doesn't mean there isn't prep time.
- There is a spectrum of fidelity versus creativity that individual teachers will need to navigate with the help of their educational team. Lessons include suggested activities; however, a teacher could easily take the main ideas and the outcomes and choose a different method. Lessons are sequenced for the teachers' convenience; a teacher might choose a different order to speak to their own strengths or sense of their classroom. Lessons always include suggested source texts from storybooks to parsha commentary so that a teacher will never be unprepared; however, a teacher might choose a substitute text that they enjoy more and meets the same goals.
- The curriculum assumes that time will be allocated to Hebrew and to in-school prayer experiences on a weekly basis. As such, in 3rd-7th grade we provide 3 hours of material, assuming that the other two hours are spent on Hebrew and prayer experiences. (We do, however, include materials teaching about prayers: content, meaning, relevance, etc.)
- You will see sections with a whistle graphic called "Coach's Voice". This is the voice of our professional educators speaking directly to the teachers regarding social-emotional awarenesses or specific suggestions about how to navigate tricky material. For example, when we teach Jewish weddings in 5th grade, there will be a coach's voice helping teachers to navigate the many interfaith relationships we assume are in the room; in 8th grade, when we tackle Israeli current events, the coach's voice will help to suggest ways to provide a multi-vocal approach rather than the teacher's personal opinion.
- Any time an author noticed that a piece of the lesson would need to be transformed in order to meet the needs of a virtual classroom, they provide suggestions for how to go about that. These boxes are labeled "Virtual Tips & Tricks".
- At the end of each lesson, you will find learning outcomes which should guide a teacher in how to prioritize elements of their lessons.

Though this curriculum was designed by and for Anshe Emet, our dearest hope is that it will impact others as well. We consciously identified any elements from the curriculum that speak only to our congregation or context (for instance, 4th graders learn Chicago Jewish History, whereas you may want to insert the Jewish history of your own region or city). We are acutely

aware of how lucky we are to have the resources to develop something of this magnitude, and it is our fondest wish that other congregations will derive benefit from this work.

We want to directly acknowledge the authors who have put together this work. Though this is a team process, there are individual hands at play in each grade:

JK, SK, & 1st: Maxine Segal Handelman
2nd & 3rd: Rabbi D'ror Chankin-Gould
4th & 5th: Cantor Elizabeth Berke (with sections written by Jessica Kaz, Miron Hirsch, & Naava Weiner)
6th: Rabbi David Russo
7th & 8th: Samantha Isenstein (with sections written by Jessica Kaz & Miron Hirsch)

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Content Associate: Rachel Tanzer
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Thank you for your interest in this project. We are so excited to share it with you!

Contents

FAQ

1. **Do I need to teach EXACTLY what is on the page? Do I need to teach ALL of this? Can I make changes/substitutions/additions? Can I mix and match the pieces of the curriculum in a different way than it is designed?**

   There is a spectrum of fidelity versus creativity that individual teachers will need to navigate with the help of their educational team. Lessons include suggested activities; however, a teacher could easily take the main ideas and the outcomes and choose a different method. Lessons are sequenced for the teachers' convenience; a teacher might choose a different order to speak to their own strengths or sense of their classroom. Lessons always include suggested source texts from storybooks to parsha commentary so that a teacher will never be unprepared; however, a teacher might choose a substitute text that they enjoy more and meets the same goals.

   However, be mindful that the curriculum is carefully composed to spiral up from earlier grades into older grades, and to incorporate "horizontal alignment" (topics that mutually reinforce each other within a specific grade). So, if you choose to make candle sticks in a year where you don't see the craft, you might be repeating something the students did the previous year. Or, if you choose to move Ruth from 4th grade to 5th grade, the Ruth-Shavuot-Conversion lessons will no longer be horizontally aligned.

   The curriculum is designed to be modular. Take the pieces that speak to your audience or faculty, and resequence as needed. Just keep in mind some of the caveats above.

2. **If I have questions, can I contact the authors?**

   Absolutely! Contact Tamar Brooks, tbrooks@ansheemet.org, and she can work with your team to connect you to the appropriate author.

3. **Is homework expected?**

   No. We anticipate that all work happens during school hours.

4. **Which materials should be taught on weekends vs. weekdays?**

   This decision is up to each principal/head of school. We have found consistency to be key: you will want to make sure that teachers are in clear communication with one

another so that all the material is covered, and nothing is repeated (especially if you have more than one classroom per grade).

5. **Does this curriculum include Hebrew?**

   No. The curriculum assumes that time will be allocated to Hebrew and to in-school prayer experiences on a weekly basis. As such, in 3rd-7th grade we provide 3 hours of material, assuming that the other two hours are spent on Hebrew and prayer experiences. (We do, however, include materials teaching about prayers: content, meaning, relevance, etc.)

6. **What if there is a class prayer service or prep period at the top of the page that doesn't lead to a lesson?**

   For example, weekly grade-level services and some class service prep lessons are noted in the titles at the top of the page but are not spelled out below. These should be tailored by the Cantor or music specialist at your school. Consider using the tefillah chart in the addendum to guide those services. In addition, some "textploration" preparation or presentation days are indicated in the lesson heading but not spelled out explicitly since these are intuitive when following the sweep of the previous lessons.

7. **What are the expectations of Tefillah?**

   You will see references to the fact that we suggest that each class prepares to help lead a class service at some point during the year, and so time is sometimes allocated for that (JK-2nd is Kabbalat Shabbat; 3rd is Ma'ariv & Havdalah; 4th & 5th are Shacharit; 6th is Torah Service; 7th has no class service because it's their B'nai Mitzvah year; 8th is weekday Shacharit) .

8. **How might specialists (theatre, art, music, etc.) use this curriculum?**

   The scope and sequence flags individual lessons where specialists might be especially useful. A specialist might reinforce some of the specific existent lessons using their art form (for example, an art specialist helps make the 3rd grade Havdalah set). Or, by familiarizing themselves with the overarching arc of each grade (see addendum), they might adapt their lessons to reinforce ideas that the students are exploring that year (for example, the theatre specialist knows that 2nd graders focus on honoring parents, so

when they are slated to attend the class, even if that isn't specifically being taught that day, they create a play based on that general theme).

9. **If my school combines grades (such as 1st and 2nd grade), how do I use this curriculum?**

   You might consider rotating the curriculum from one year to the next on an A/B schedule. For example, in Year A the 1st/2nd grade class uses the 1st grade curriculum; in Year B they use the 2nd grade curriculum.

10. **How many hours of school does this curriculum anticipate? What if my school has less/more hours?**

    This curriculum is based on Anshe Emet's current module where JK-2nd is 3 hours per week, 3rd-7th is 5 hours per week, and 8th is 2 hours per week. The curriculum provided lesson plans for up to 25 weeks of school.

11. **What if the material isn't engaging for a student or students?**

    Lean in to the outcomes and the scope and sequence to understand the thrust of the lesson. Don't feel limited by the suggested activities. If your students prefer word searches to art activities, go for it! The overall structure will keep learning on track, but the art of connecting the material to your students can only be enacted by you using the methods and ideas which are authentically your own.

12. **Would this curriculum be appropriate for a Reform or non-Conservative synagogue?**

    Yes. There are very few references to the Conservative Movement per se. That said, there are some. For example, in 6th grade there are lessons about what Conservative Judaism is and where it comes from. In 8th grade, the comparative denominations lessons assume an audience of youth at a Conservative synagogue learning about the Reform and Orthodox movements. You may want to substitute these for more tailored lessons. In general, the halakhic (Jewish legal) approach does come from a Conservative Movement mindset (for example, Kashrut is encouraged) and the lessons involving the siddur and chumash refer to page numbers in Lev Shalem and Etz Hayim, respectively. Keep in mind that the curriculum is designed to be modular: take the pieces that work best for your audience, and tweak as needed.

13. What's this extra material at the bottom?

In some grades there are more lessons written than days of the year. The extra lessons are organized on the final pages of each grade's annual curriculum. The majority of these "extra" lessons are 3rd and 6th grade parsha material, since the calendar changes from one year to the next. There are a handful of other holiday-specific lessons and the like in other grades for which there wasn't space in this calendar year, but which could definitely be repurposed in a future year.

14. Next year's calendar is SO different than this one (holidays, school breaks, parshiot, etc.), what do I do?!

The scope and sequence should guide you in the overall arc of each subject area within each grade. The order in which the lessons are taught will necessarily change from one year to the next and from one school to the next. You could (A) give teachers the entire year of lessons (25 weeks worth of material) and let them decide what to teach on any given day. You could (B) give teachers a set of subject headings that you want covered on a particular day (such as, on Oct 12th teach "Jonah lesson 2" and "Yom Kippur Deep Dive 3") and ask teachers to sift through the documents to find those lessons. Or you could (C), as Anshe Emet has, copy and paste precisely the lessons which are desired into a document for each day of school. This last method will require annually engaging in that resequencing activity. We find it worthwhile because of ease of communication, consistency, and a realistic sense of how much time to ask teachers to put in for prep.

15. How does this material work for a virtual setting?

Any time an author noticed that a piece of the lesson would need to be transformed in order to meet the needs of a virtual classroom, they provide suggestions for how to go about that. These boxes are labeled "Virtual Tips & Tricks".

16. With so much material provided, does a teacher need to prepare? For how long? What is the teacher's role?

We anticipate about 1 hour of prep time per school day (this will vary based on a teacher's familiarity with the topics being covered). Though materials are provided, teachers need to sequence the lessons, familiarize themselves with the subject matter, and decide on their own personal touches. The materials on the page are not a lesson plan per se, but they are robust and thorough so that there should be very minimal need

to find resources. That said, the magic of the classroom is always about how the teacher, as an artist, brings those raw materials to life.

Addendums & Charts (click to access)

- Scope and Sequence
- Outcomes and Buckets
- Overarching Buckets
- Library Chart
- Tefillah Chart
- Ritual Objects Chart

Grade-Specific Materials & Introductions

- Introduction to Loose Parts (JK-1st)
- Introduction to Textploration (3rd-7th)
- Introduction to Torah Commentary (6th)

Introduction to Loose Parts | JK-1st Grade

Throughout this curriculum in the youngest grades, the "Loose Parts" strategy is liberally employed. Loose Parts is a means of using open-ended materials to deepen thinking and engagement in your religious school classroom. It is a worthy alternative to drawing with markers or painting.

Loose parts are materials that can be moved, carried, combined, redesigned, lined up, taken apart, and put back together in multiple ways. They are materials with no specific set of directions that can be used alone or in concert with other materials.

Loose parts might include:

- Acorns
- Beads
- Corks
- Egg cartons
- Fabric scraps
- Lids
- Pine cones
- Pipe cleaners
- Stones/Pebbles

Parents and congregants are an excellent source for collecting loose parts. Boxes or baskets will be necessary for the organization, and space will need to be set aside to store loose parts.

Using Loose Parts is recommended in this curriculum because it affords teachers and students a richer way to immerse in and document learning.

For example, this is Pesach with Loose Parts:

"I made the sea. I used seashells and rocks because they are like the land. In the middle are big waves splashing up. That circle-y things is so the Israelites can go through. But the Egyptians won't go through because of the waves. (pause) That's sad. (pause) That's really sad. (takes out waves)" Lily, age 5

Using loose parts in the classroom:

1. Select specific loose parts to bring into the classroom
    a. Consider introducing fewer different types of loose parts until students become more familiar with loose parts.
    b. Start with 2 or 3 different loose parts, and add more, up to 5-6 kinds of loose parts, in later lessons or in older grades.
2. Invite students to create a scene from a story or text or respond to a question or prompt using loose parts.
3. Typically, students work on their own creations. Occasionally, it may better meet your learning goals to have 2-3 students collaborate.
4. Provide each student space to work. You might need to provide a defined space, such as a large piece of construction paper or a tray. You may just space students out, so each has enough room on a table or the floor.
5. Invite students to choose loose parts items from what is provided.
6. Allow 15-20 minutes for students to use their materials to arrange a scene to illustrate:
    a. What they have learned
    b. What they are wondering about
    c. Their theories or understandings
7. Loose parts are not glued or taped together.
8. Teachers and madrichim take pictures of students working and of students' final creations.
9. Students reflect on their creation with a few lines of writing. For younger students, teachers and madrichim work with students to take dictation.
10. Once the creations are documented with photos and reflections, students return loose parts to their storage containers.
11. Consider sharing photos of students' work and reflections with parents and community digitally (i.e., in an ongoing google slideshow) or in a portfolio for each student.

Thank you to Alison Zimbalist (alisonzimbalist@gmail.com) for Loose Parts definitions and documentation examples.

Introduction to Textploration | 3rd-7th Grade

The Textploration curriculum is designed to bring sacred text to life through arts modalities. In addition to introductory texts and discussion questions, the intention is to break the year into trimesters, and to use one unique art modality per trimester.

At Anshe Emet Synagogue, this system was implemented in fourth, fifth, and seventh grade for ease of execution. The curriculum outlines bringing Trimester 1 (Weekly Parsha, Jonah, Joshua/Deborah/Yael, Parsha with Commentary, & Isaiah) to life with **Photography,** Trimester 2 (Weekly Parsha, Esther, Samson, Parsha with Commentary, & Jeremiah) with **Theatre**, and Trimester 3 (Weekly Parsha, Ruth, King David, Parsha with Commentary, & Ezekiel) with **Clay.**

No doubt, your school will want to evaluate the system and modalities that best suit your needs. You may want to choose art modalities where teachers/community members have expertise. You may want to rotate modalities from one year to the next. You may want to implement in third through seventh or just fourth, fifth, and seventh (the parsha years are trickier). The big idea is using art as a means to more deeply explore the meaning of the text and its relevance to the life of the learner.

Introduction to Torah Commentary (Drash) | 6th Grade

In sixth grade, students will approach Parashat HaShavuah, the weekly parsha, which they last focused on in third grade. However, the third grade curriculum emphasizes pshat, the literal text itself. This year, the goal is to focus on drash, commentary. The curriculum will provide you with drash material. Sometimes the commentary will be classic; sometimes it will be contemporary and creative.

The key is for students to learn that when Jewish people encounter Torah text, we enrich our understanding by seeking the thoughts and reflections and creative imaginations of our ancestors and our contemporaries. As students engage in their own B'nai Mitzvah journeys, the skill of understanding what drash is, and why it matters, is the meta lesson for each week of parsha study.

Vocabulary to note:
(Definitions from www.myjewishlearning.com)

- **Midrash**: Midrash seeks out the answers to religious questions (both practical and theological) by plumbing the meaning of the words of the Torah. Midrash interprets biblical narrative, exploring questions of ethics or theology, or creating homilies and parables based on the text.
- **Mishnah**: The Mishnah presents itself as a case book of Jewish law, carefully laying out different opinions.
- **Gemara**: After the publication of the Mishnah, the sages of Israel and Babylonia (modern day Iraq), began to study both the Mishnah and the traditional teachings. Their work consisted largely of working out the Mishnah's inner logic, trying to extract legal principles from the specific statements of case law, searching out the derivations of the legal statements from Scripture, and relating statements found in the Mishnah to traditions that were left out. Each community produced its own Gemara which have been preserved as two different multi-volume sets: the Talmud Yerushalmi and the Talmud Bavli.
- **Kabbalah**: Kabbalah is the most famous form of Jewish mysticism. It flowered in 13th century Spain with the writing of the Zohar, a commentary on the Torah concerned primarily with understanding the divine world and its relation to our world.
- **Talmud**: Talmud is the generic term for the documents that comment and expand upon the Mishnah, the first work of rabbinic law. Due to its spare and laconic style, the Talmud is studied, not read.

A few of the key figures used in this curriculum:
(Biographical information from www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org)

- **Rashi**: Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki, renowned Biblical commentator who favored the use of midrash. Born in Troyes, France; 1040-1105 CE.
- **Rambam**: Moses Maimonides, author of the Mishneh Torah (code of Jewish law). Born in Spain; 1135-1204 CE.
- **Ramban/Nachmanides**: Moshe ben Nachman, first to incorporate Kabbalah (mystical teachings) into Biblical commentary. Born in Girona, Spain; 1194-1270 CE.

- **Sforno**: Obadiah ben Jacob, Biblical commentator with a scientific/non-mystical approach. Born in Cesena, Italy; 1470-1550 CE.
- **Ibn Ezra**: Abraham ibn Ezra, Biblical commentator with a grammatical/literal approach. Born in Spain; 1089-1164.
- **Or HaChaim**: Chaim ibn Attar, Talmudic scholar and Kabbalist. Born in Morocco; 1696-1743 CE.
- **A.J. Heschel**: Abraham Joshua Heschel, American rabbi, scholar, and philosopher. 1907-1972.
- **Shai Held**: Contemporary rabbi, scholar, and educator at Mechon Hadar.

Summary for Website

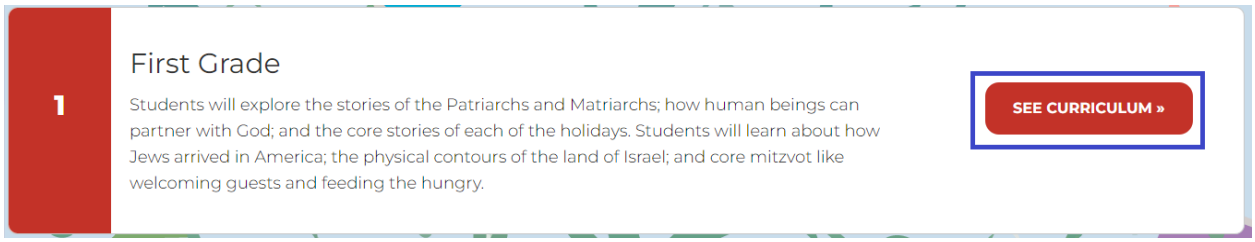
Button on curriculum landing page: **Welcome!**

- Redirects to the below

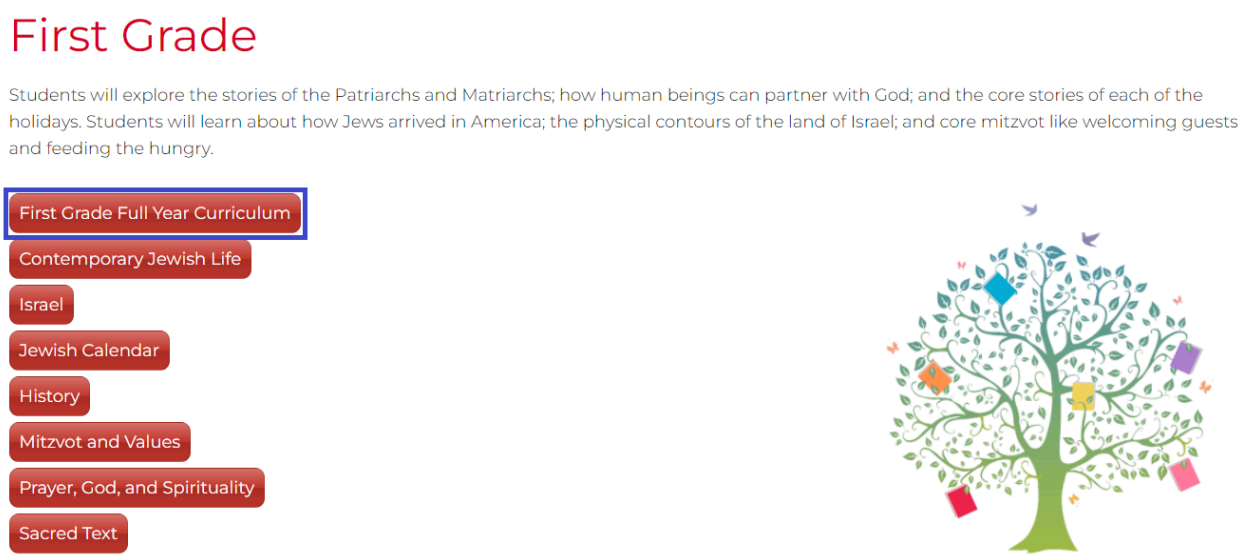
Thank you for your interest in the Beverly Goldstick Curriculum for 21st Century Jewish Learning! We are so excited to share our work with you.

Some helpful hints:

- To access the curriculum, click the **See Curriculum** button for each grade you wish to view.



- Our educators have put together a model year, showcasing how the full curriculum might be used. To view, click on the **Full Year Curriculum** button on each grade's page.



- Your institution may prefer to mix and match pieces of the curriculum, rather than using the full year model.
    - Each grade is organized into 7 educational "buckets" (**Mitzvot & Values**, **Sacred Text**, etc.). To view all lessons within each bucket, click the appropriate button on each grade's page.

- Our educators have created a variety of helpful charts and lists to aid you in organizing and using the curriculum. To view these, our FAQ page, and more detailed information for each grade, please refer to (**link to PDF?**).
- Questions? We're here for you!
    - For questions about the curriculum itself, contact Tamar Brooks
    - For questions about the website or other technical help, contact Brian Schmidt (?)