

Blessings

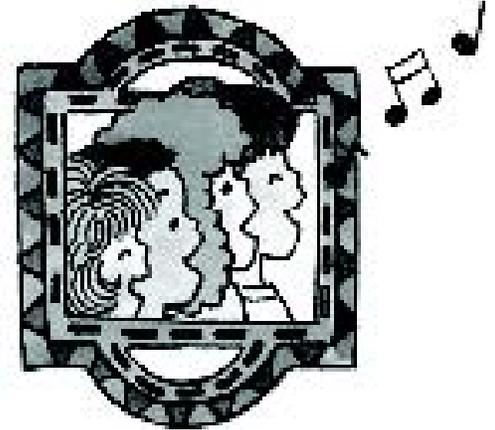
Shabbat Blessings

Shabbat begins at sundown each Friday night, marking the end of the week.

Shabbat Candles

Baruch atah Adonai Elohenu melech ha-o-lom Asher kid'shanu B'mitzvotav v'tsivanu L'had lik ner shel Shabbat. Amen.

Blessed, are you, our G-d, Ruler of the Universe, who has sanctified and commanded us to kindle the Sabbath lights.



Kiddush – Blessing over the wine (or juice for the underage)

Baruch atah Adonai Elohenu melech ha-o-lom Bo-rey p'ree hah-gah-fen.

Blessed are you, our G-d, Ruler of the Universe, who created the fruit of the vine.

Challah – Blessing over the bread

Song 🎵

Hamotze Lechem min ha-aretz
We give thanks to G-d for bread.
Our voices join in happy chorus
as our prayer is humbly said.

Blessing

Baruch atah Adonai Elohenu melech ha-o-lom Hamotze lechem min ha-aretez. Amen.

Blessed are you, our G-d, Ruler of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.



Havdalah Blessings

On Saturday evening when we can see three stars in the sky, Shabbat ends and we welcome the new week.



Kiddush – Repeat blessing over wine.

Blessing for Spices

Baruch atah Adonai elohenu melech ha-o-lom borai mee-nai v'sam-meen.

Blessed are you, our G-d, Ruler of the universe, who creates fragrances in the world of beauty.

Pass the spice box to smell the fragrance.

Blessing for Havdalah Candle

Baruch atah Adonai Elohenu melech ha-o-lom Bo-rey m'orey ha-esh.

Blessed are you, our G-d, Ruler of the universe, who creates the light of fire.



Spread your hands toward the candlelight to see the light reflected in your fingernails and the shadow projected on your palms to symbolically separate day from evening, light from darkness and Shabbat from the weekdays.

Baruch atah Adonai, Elohenu melech ha-o-lom, ha-mav-deel beyn k'desh l'chal.

Blessed are you, our G-d, Ruler of the universe, who separates sacred from profane.

Sip the wine and then extinguish the Havdalah candle in the wine. A good week, a week of peace.

Blessing for Other Foods

Fruit

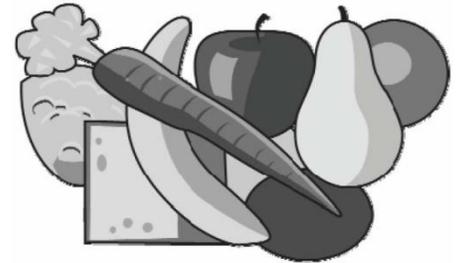
Baruch ata Adonai elohenu melech ha-o-lom borai pri-ha-etz.

Blessed are you, our G-d, ruler of the universe, who creates the fruit of the tree.

Cookies & Cake

Baruch ata Adonai elohenu melech a-o-lom borai mee-nai m'zonot.

Blessed are you, our G-d, Ruler of the universe, who creates food.



Jewish Holidays

The JCC is a place for the Jewish community to gather and celebrate Jewish festivals and holidays. An elementary introduction to the story of the holidays and their traditional rituals will be explored in the Pre-School. A focus on Jewish culture will be an ongoing part of the educational program. We learn about the holidays through music, arts and crafts, dance, film and cooking.

To help us celebrate, we invite parents to join us for several of the holidays during the school year. The children will participate in a special all-school Passover and Tu B'Shevat Seders, Lag B'Omer event and Purim Parade and Show.

Shabbat / Havdallah

Although Shabbat lasts from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday, we celebrate the Sabbath at school every Friday. Our classes join together for Shabbat singing. The teacher lights the candles and the children recite the traditional blessing. On Shabbat the children enjoy challah (braided egg bread) and juice. Havdalah (separation) is also part of the Shabbat curriculum as we end Shabbat. We gather together to celebrate Havdallah and welcome the new week every Monday morning.

Rosh Hashanah

The Jewish year begins with Rosh Hashanah, which usually falls in September on the first day of Tishri, the seventh month in the Jewish calendar. Rosh Hashanah begins a ten day period of reflection and self-examination. The main symbol of this holiday is the sounding of the shofar (a ram's horn) which is meant to awaken our inner self. The children enjoy apples and honey which are symbolic of hope for a sweet new year.

Yom Kippur

This is the most solemn holiday of the year — the Day of Atonement. At this time, we discuss the nice things we can do for others during the new year, as well as what saying "I'm sorry" means — that we will endeavor not to do things which can harm others again.





Sukkot

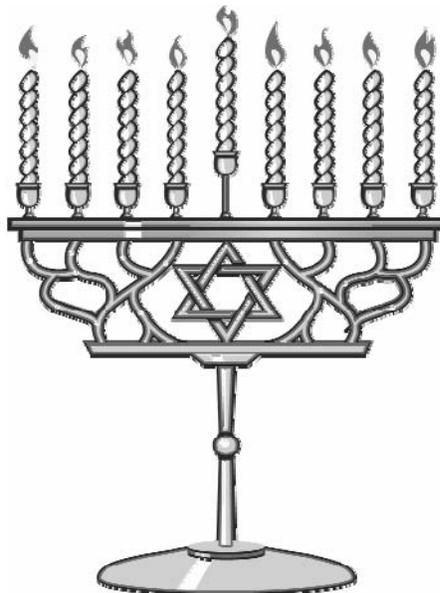
The "Feast of Tabernacles" recalls the journey of the Jews from Egypt to the Promised Land when they lived in tents and booths, or sukkot. The harvest season is symbolized by the lulav (palm branch) and etrog (citrus). During this week at school, we decorate our sukkah (tent or booth) with fruit and greenery, have singing time and enjoy our snacks outdoors.

Simchat Torah

This holiday is associated with Sukkot but is actually an independent holiday, falling on the day after Sukkot ends. Throughout the year, passages of the Torah are read aloud in the synagogue. On Simchat Torah, the reading is completed (with the last two chapters of Deuteronomy), then immediately begun again (with Genesis). This symbolizes the fact that study of the Torah has no beginning and no end. Children are given the honor in temple of being called to read the Torah alongside the adults. Children also join adults in carrying Israeli flags and specially decorated flags in a series of seven processions (or hakafot) around the synagogue. The seven processions are in honor of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joseph and David. We celebrate with the children by unfurling the Torah.

Chanukah

The "Festival of Lights" celebrates the Maccabean victory when brave Judah Maccabee and his small band of followers saved the Jewish nation from the Syrians. For eight days each year, the Chanukiah, or nine-branched menorah, is lighted to recall the re-dedication of the temple in Jerusalem and to give thanks for the great miracle of the survival of the Jewish people. Chanukah is a festive time of year at the JCC; our children participate in a Chanukah Show and families are invited to classroom parties. In addition, each day we light the Chanukiah until all 8 lights and the helper in the middle have been lit.





Tu B'Shevat (Birthday of the Trees/Israeli Arbor Day)

On Tu B'Shevat we celebrate the new year of the trees and our own belief in the future of the world. The Jewish calendar, with all of its holidays is tied to the cycle of growing things. As Jews, we have a kinship with trees, especially fruit trees. Trees are a symbol of life, a symbol of the Jewish people.

Purim

Purim is the jolliest of all the holidays, commemorating how Queen Esther and her uncle Mordecai saved the Jews of Persia from a plot by the prime minister, Haman, to destroy them. This day we eat hamentaschen and listen to the story of the brave Esther. It is customary to make so much noise during the storytelling that we cannot hear the name Haman! The children participate in a parade and enjoy watching the Purim Shpiel put on by our ECE Staff.

Pesach (Passover)

Passover commemorates the experiences and ordeals of slavery in Egypt and the Exodus following them. The word Seder means "order," referring to the telling of the story and the performance of certain rituals. Traditionally, a festive meal follows the Seder. The Seder is a special and fun family occasion. Prayers and songs from the Haggadah story are read and certain foods are eaten. The best known of these is matzah, or unleavened bread.

Yom Ha'Atzmaut

Israel Independence Day. Occurs on the 5th day of Iyar. Began in 1948. The children learn about Israel during the Cycles for Smiles event by taking a "trip" to Israel where they explore the Red Sea, climb Masade, fish in Lake Kineret, and write notes on the Wailing Wall.

Lag B'Omer

This holiday recalls the struggle of the Jews to regain their independence as a Jewish nation during the second century B.C.E. The Romans ruling Palestine banned the study of the Torah and Jewish literature. Jews continued learning in secret. It is believed they studied in caves and forests under the pretense of hunting, picnicking and hiking. Eventually, they organized a heroic revolt which resulted in a massacre of the Jews. Today, however, the holiday celebrates Jewish survival.

Shavuot

Shavuot, a thanksgiving and harvest feast, also commemorates the giving of the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai. Known as the "Feast of Weeks," Shavuot is celebrated seven weeks after Passover. It is customary to decorate the house with plants and flowers — the greens recall the green mountains of Sinai where Moses received the Commandments, as well as the fruits of the ancient harvest festival.