Jewish Practice
Why Practice?

Setting standards for Jewish practice education is a complicated and sensitive project, more so than setting standards for Jewish text education. The Jewish community as a whole doesn’t have a uniform set of practices. As curricular goals can never be fully separated from religious convictions, schools teach according to the religious outlooks and ideologies of their communities. Additionally, some pluralistic and community schools intentionally choose not to teach or promote a specific ideology or standard of practice. Furthermore, we are not certain even how critical or central a role schools have to play in inculcating religious commitment and behavior. In some contexts and for some students, schools clearly play an important role. But in other contexts, schools may be much more marginal when compared to the home, extended family, intergenerational religious institutions like synagogues, or immersive settings like camps.

Because of all of these complications, teaching Jewish practice can feel very overwhelming. In addition, the topic of Jewish practice is so vast, with endless variations, that it can be frustrating for educators to try to determine what to teach. With that in mind, in this section, we aim to enumerate and catalog the basic elements of the life of a practicing Jew, as reflected in traditional rabbinic sources. We do not expect broad consensus on every practice or piece of knowledge in this catalog; some educators will reject items while others will find items missing. However, we offer this catalog as a model of what it would look like to give students full competence in Jewish practice, such that students who are fluent in these practices would be fully comfortable inhabiting a world of Jewish practice, and equipped for wide-ranging interactions and journeys within the Jewish world.

Portrait of Fluency

An eighth grader who is fluent in Jewish practice feels a sense of commitment to halakhah as an expression of Jewish values in dialogue with the realities of the world. She can comfortably and confidently perform mitzvot, both ritual and interpersonal, attending to their technical details, including when and how they are performed. She is also familiar with key terminology and concepts that relate to the performance of mitzvot. Not satisfied to unquestioningly perform mitzvot, she investigates the deeper meaning and underlying values of the mitzvot, making her performance of mitzvot personally meaningful. She appreciates that Jewish communities across space and time have interpreted and applied Jewish law in different ways, and that, while many practices

¹ We use the word “mitzvot” in this section in a broad sense rather than a technical sense, referring to practices, observances, and minhagim.
are consistent across communities, some are varied. She respects this diversity, seeking to both better understand the practices of her community, as well as the practices of other communities to which she is exposed. Finally, she understands that as she matures, she may experience and relate to mitzvot in different ways; therefore, she seeks to develop an increasing attachment to mitzvot and identification with Jewish traditions that allow her to apply the tradition to her life in meaningful ways.

**Explanation of Fluency**

**Benchmarks**

Performance of mitzvot is not learned sequentially. For example, students do not generally learn to perform the mitzvah of shaking a lulav and etrog in one year while deferring the mitzvah of sitting in the sukkah to a later grade. Rather, students are often exposed to the performance of many mitzvot year after year and gain fluency through repeated exposure. As such, it makes little sense to sequence performance benchmarks by grade. However, some content knowledge related to the performance of mitzvot (like the melakhot of Shabbat) would logically be introduced only in older grades. Therefore, the fluency standards in Jewish practice are formatted as a list of Jewish practices whose performance should be mastered by the conclusion of eighth grade. Mastery includes the ability to perform the technical details of the mitzvot, and to express the meaning of the mitzvot and the values on which they are based, as well as related content knowledge.

**A Note About Experiential Education, Texts, Mitzvot Aseh, and Mitzvot Lo Ta’aseh**

We believe that gaining knowledge of and fluency in mitzvot is nearly impossible without performing those mitzvot with some regularity; therefore, we advocate that schools collaborate with families, synagogues, and camps to create opportunities for students to perform these mitzvot.

*Mitzvot aseh* are usually best taught experientially; the most effective way for students learn how to shake a lulav is to repeat the berakha and shake the lulav, following the directions of a knowledgeable adult. While it may be helpful for students to study relevant texts that describe how to perform the practice, it is the performance itself, particularly in the younger grades, that is most instructive.

In contrast, *mitzvot lo ta’aseh* can be more difficult to teach experientially. For example, while one could not eat milk and meat together, the performance of abstaining from that food combination is not the most effective way to learn how to keep kosher. Rather, studying texts about kashrut is more instructive in observing the laws of kashrut. In fourth grade and beyond when
students’ text skills (both in Hebrew and in English) become significantly stronger, we recommend rooting the study of Jewish practice in text for both mitzvot aseh and mitzvot lo ta’aseh. The text can be a prepared curriculum, a compilation of relevant biblical and rabbinic texts, or a halakhic work such as R. Chayim David Ha-Levi’s Kitzur Shulchan Arukh Mekor Chayim or R. Isaac Klein’s A Guide to Jewish Religious Practice.

A Note about Mitzvot Ben Adam Le-Chavero

We have separated mitzvot ben adam le-chavero (interpersonal mitzvot) into its own chart. While most ritual mitzvot are either performed correctly or not, interpersonal mitzvot are often aspirational; we are always trying to improve on our ability to perform them. In addition, they can be especially difficult for children to perform, as they involve impulse-control and emotion regulation. Therefore, although we include benchmarks for the performance of these mitzvot, we acknowledge that many students will be on a path to increased performance as they mature. Also, while these mitzvot overlap with general norms of appropriate social conduct and are often not viewed as “religious,” we believe that children should relate to them as mitzvot that are part of Jewish practice. Finally, many of these mitzvot may be best taught and learned not through curricular units, but rather through the classroom culture and daily routines.² We therefore encourage teachers to look for opportunities to teach these mitzvot outside of the formal curriculum.

² For example, a classroom job in kindergarten may be to call a child who is sick at home. Students in this class learn to practice bikur cholim through the fact that this classroom job exists more than through a curricular unit on bikur cholim.
# Fluency Benchmarks

## Jewish Practice Fluency Benchmarks

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<th>Category</th>
<th>Practices to be Mastered</th>
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| **Daily, Shabbat, and Holiday Tefillot and Berakhot**<sup>(See Tefillah Fluency Standards for a full delineation of the skills and content knowledge necessary for fluency in Tefillah.)</sup> | • Participating in Tefillah appropriately as a member of the kahal  
• Familiarity with different nuscha’ot for weekday, Shabbat, holidays, and Yamim Nora’im  
• Familiarity with popular melodies for tefillot  
• Putting on tzitzit  
• Laying tefillin  
• Reciting appropriate berakhot on occasions (hearing thunder, seeing a rainbow etc.)  
• Reciting appropriate berakhot before food  
• Reciting appropriate berakhot after food | • Knows about the obligations of prayer:  
Who is obligated  
When prayer occurs  
Which tefillot are said when  
Which tefillot may only be said with a minyan  
• Knows that there is liturgical variation in different Jewish communities  
• Knows the concept of berakhah le-vatalah  
• Knows the architecture of a synagogue, including ner tamid, amud, bimah, mizrach  
• Knows about practices of covering one’s head especially during times of prayer and learning |
| **Laws and Customs of Shabbat** | • Reciting Shabbat liturgy  
• Performing ritual practices of Shabbat—hadlakat nerot, Kiddush, Havdalah  
• Singing Shabbat zemirot | • Can distinguish between positive and negative mitzvot of Shabbat  
• Knows that there are 39 melakhot forbidden on Shabbat derived from the construction of the mishkan and that they relate to farming, making fabric, making leather, writing, building, fire/cooking, carrying  
• Is familiar with the concept of an eruv for carrying  
• Is familiar with the concept of muktzeh  
• Can connect observance of Shabbat with creation  
• Is familiar with concept of oneg Shabbat |
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| **Jewish Holiday Laws and Customs (General)** | • Performing ritual practices of Jewish holidays  
• Reciting the holiday liturgy, including passages infrequently said, such as Rosh Ha-Shanah Musaf and hoshanot (as part of attaining fluent comfort with the siddur)  
• Singing popular songs related to holidays | • Knows the dates of Jewish holidays  
• Knows the terms eruv tavshilin and okhel nefesh  
• Knows that fire and carrying are different from the other melakhot  
• Knows which megillot are read on which holidays |
| **Rosh Chodesh** | • Making appropriate liturgical changes for Rosh Chodesh | • Knows the names of the Hebrew months in order  
• Knows that Rosh Chodesh corresponds to the appearance of the new moon |
| **Rosh Ha-Shanah** | • Performing tashlik  
• Reciting blessings and “yehi ratzon” over symbolic foods  
• Reciting Rosh Ha-Shanah liturgy | • Knows different names of Rosh Ha-Shanah  
• Can discuss main themes of Rosh Ha-Shanah—birthday of the world, judgment, repentance  
• Knows that Elul is the lead-up to Rosh Ha-Shanah and includes blowing shofar, Le-David, and Selichot  
• Knows that Musaf is divided into Malkhuyot, Shofarot, Zikhronot  
• Knows names of shofar blasts  
• Can offer multiple reasons for why we blow shofar and what it symbolizes (to wake us up, to proclaim God’s kingship) |
| **Aseret Yemei Teshuvah** | • Making appropriate liturgical changes for Aseret Yemei Teshuvah | • Can discuss main themes of Aseret Yemei Teshuvah—repentance |
| **Yom Kippur** | • Reciting appropriate blessing on candles “le-hadlik ner shel Yom Ha-Kippurim”  
• Beating chest while reciting “al cheit”  
• Reciting Yom Kippur liturgy  
• Integrating fasting into practice when approaching adulthood | • Can discuss main themes of Yom Kippur—repentance, forgiveness  
• Knows the five inuyim of Yom Kippur  
• Is familiar with halakhic categories related to fasting—choleh, shiurim  
• Can summarize plot and main themes of Book of Jonah and explain why it’s read on Yom Kippur |
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| Sukkot   | • Shaking arba’at ha-minim alone and as part of Hallel  
• Reciting the berakhah “le-shev ba-sukkah” appropriately  
• Reciting Sukkot liturgy, including hoshanot | • Knows different names of Sukkot  
• Can discuss main themes of Sukkot—vulnerability, God’s protection, harvest, gratitude, joy  
• Knows basic architectural components of a sukkah (two or more walls, skhakh, more shade than sun)  
• Knows what activities to perform in the sukkah and when to say the berakhah “le-shev ba-sukkah”  
• Knows the components of the arba’at ha-minim  
• Knows that hoshanot take place  
• Can name the ushpizin  
• Can summarize main themes of Kohelet and offer a variety of explanations for why it’s read on Sukkot  
• Knows that Simchat Beit Ha-Sho’evah took place on Sukkot and was time of rejoicing  
• Connects Sukkot with universalism through the seventy sacrifices which correspond to seventy nations |
| Shemini Atzeret | • Reciting Shemini Atzeret liturgy | • Can discuss main themes of Shemini Atzeret—joy, rain  
• Knows that Tefillat Geshem is recited  
• Knows that we begin saying “mashiv ha-ruach” |
| Simchat Torah | • Participating in hakafot  
• Reciting Simchat Torah liturgy | • Can discuss main themes of Simchat Torah—joy of studying Torah, ending and beginning cycle of Torah readings |
| Chanukah | • Lighting Chanukah candles, including reciting proper berakhot, Ha-Nerot Hallalu, Ma’oz Tzur, and arranging/lighting in the correct configuration and order  
• Knowing to recite Hallel and to insert Al Ha-Nisim in Amidah and Birkat Ha-Mazon | • Can retell the story of Chanukah  
• Can place the story of Chanukah in second Temple chronology  
• Can discuss main themes of Chanukah—religious freedom, pirsumei nisa  
• Can discuss the debate over whether the miracle of Chanukah was the military victory or the oil  
• Knows the letters on a dreidel and what they stand for  
• Knows about traditional foods fried in oil—latkes, sufganiyot |
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tu Bishvat</strong></td>
<td>• Knowing to insert Al Ha-Nisim in Amidah and Birkat Ha-Mazon&lt;br&gt;• Assembling and giving mishlo'ach manot&lt;br&gt;• Giving matanot la-evyonim</td>
<td>• Can discuss main themes of Tu Bishvat—new year for trees, first signs of spring in Israel&lt;br&gt;• Knows shivat ha-minim</td>
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<td><strong>Purim</strong></td>
<td>• Knowing to insert Al Ha-Nisim in Amidah and Birkat Ha-Mazon&lt;br&gt;• Assembling and giving mishlo'ach manot&lt;br&gt;• Giving matanot la-evyonim</td>
<td>• Can discuss main themes of Purim—ve-nahafokh hu, lottery/chance, hidden miracles, Amalek, threats to Jewish physical survival&lt;br&gt;• Can summarize plot, characters, and main themes of Book of Esther&lt;br&gt;• Knows that joy/silliness increase in Adar—mi-she-nikhnas Adar marbim be-simchah&lt;br&gt;• Knows the four mitzvot of Purim (mikra megillah, matanot la-evyonim, mishloach manot, mishteh/seudah)&lt;br&gt;• Can offer explanations for customs—why we use graggers, why we dress up, why we eat hamentaschen</td>
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<td><strong>Pesach</strong></td>
<td>• Performing bedikat and bi'ur chametz&lt;br&gt;• Performing mitzvot of drinking four cups, eating matzah and maror, with appropriate berakhot&lt;br&gt;• Reciting Mah Nishtanah&lt;br&gt;• Reciting selections of Hallel at the Seder&lt;br&gt;• Reciting Pesach liturgy</td>
<td>• Knows different names of Pesach&lt;br&gt;• Can retell story of Exodus from Egypt&lt;br&gt;• Can discuss main themes of Pesach—slavery/freedom, spring&lt;br&gt;• Knows what constitutes chametz and matzah&lt;br&gt;• Is familiar with the term “lechem oni” and can explain symbolism of matzah&lt;br&gt;• Is familiar with key sections of Maggid, including Ha Lachma, Mah Nishtanah, Avadim Hayinu, four sons, Mi-tchilah, Ve-Hi She-Amdah, Tzei U-Lemad, ten plagues, Dayeinu, Rabban Gamliel (pesach, matzah, maror), Be-khol Dor Va-Dor&lt;br&gt;• Knows items on Seder plate and order of the Seder&lt;br&gt;• Can explain connection between Elijah and the Seder&lt;br&gt;• Can summarize main themes of Shir Ha-Shirim and explain why it's read on Pesach</td>
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<td><strong>Sefirat Ha-Omer</strong></td>
<td>• Performing the nightly counting of the omer</td>
<td>• Can discuss main themes of Sefirat Ha-Omer—anticipation for receiving Torah, barley harvest&lt;br&gt;• Can describe mourning customs observed during Sefirat Ha-Omer</td>
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<td><strong>Modern Holidays</strong></td>
<td>• Singing Hatikvah&lt;br&gt;• Standing silently during siren of remembrance&lt;br&gt;• Reciting Yom Ha-Atzmaut liturgy</td>
<td>• Knows that Yom Ha-Shoah is a day for remembering the Holocaust&lt;br&gt;• Is familiar with the custom of lighting yahrzeit candles to remember people who died&lt;br&gt;• Knows that Yom Ha-Zikaron is Israel's memorial day and immediately precedes Yom Ha-Atzmaut&lt;br&gt;• Knows that Yom Ha-Atzmaut marks Israel's independence and expresses gratitude for victory in the War of Independence and the creation of the State of Israel&lt;br&gt;• Knows that Yom Ha-Atzmaut presents a new liturgical question and is aware that different communities mark the day in different ways, some reciting Hallel with a berakhah, without a berakhah, with or without Torah reading and haftarah&lt;br&gt;• Knows the meaning of the words of Hatikvah&lt;br&gt;• Knows that Yom Yerushalayim marks the day when Israel took military control of the Old City of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount and celebrates victory in the Six Day War and the return of the Jewish people to the ancient sacred center of Jerusalem</td>
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<td><strong>Lag Ba-Omer</strong></td>
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<td>• Can give explanations for the celebration of Lag Ba-Omer—Rabbi Akiva’s students, Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai</td>
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<td><strong>Shavuot</strong></td>
<td>• Reciting Shavuot liturgy</td>
<td>• Knows different names of Shavuot&lt;br&gt;• Can retell the story of matan Torah&lt;br&gt;• Can discuss main themes of Shavuot—receiving Torah, wheat harvest, bikkurim&lt;br&gt;• Can summarize plot and main themes of Book of Ruth and explain why it’s read on Shavuot&lt;br&gt;• Is familiar with Shavuot customs of tikkun leil Shavuot and eating dairy</td>
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<td><strong>Tishah Be-Av</strong></td>
<td>• Making appropriate liturgical changes for Tishah Be-Av</td>
<td>• Can discuss main themes of Tishah Be-Av—destruction of Temple, exile, tragic events in Jewish history&lt;br&gt;• Can summarize main themes of Eikhah and explain why it’s read on Tishah Be-Av&lt;br&gt;• Knows mourning customs of three weeks, nine days and Tishah Be-Av</td>
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<td>Minor Fast Days (Includes Tzom Gedaliah, Asarah Be-Tevet, Ta’anit Esther, Ta’anit Bekhorot, 17 Tammuz)</td>
<td>• Making appropriate liturgical changes for fast day</td>
<td>• Knows why we fast on each of the minor fast days</td>
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</table>
| Laws and Customs of Kashrut | • Asking relevant questions to ascertain the kosher status of a given food | • Knows criteria for kosher mammals (split hooves and chew cud) and fish (fins and scales)  
• Knows that kosher birds are listed in the Torah  
• Knows that milk and meat may not be eaten or cooked together  
• Knows that kosher animals must be killed in a specific way (shechitah)  
• Knows that blood may not be consumed  
• Knows that there are restrictions on food cooked by non-Jews and on wine and cheese produced by non-Jews |
| Lifecycle Laws and Customs | • Participating appropriately as a member of the kahal at Jewish lifecycle events | • Is familiar with basic components of Jewish lifecycle events |
| • Brit Milah/ Simchat Bat  
• Bar/Bat Mitzvah  
• Wedding/Sheva Berakhot  
• Funeral  
• Shiva Home | | |
| Mitzvot Teluyot Ba-Aretz | | • Knows that there are agricultural laws that apply to food grown in the Land of Israel, including shemitah, terumah and ma’aser |
### Jewish Practice Fluency Benchmarks

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| **Mitzvot related to the Earth and animals** | • Taking environmental impact into account when making choices about consumption and waste disposal  
• Treating animals kindly | • Knows the terms *bal tashchit* and *tza’ar ba’alei chayim*  
• Can connect care for the earth and animals to the role of humans in creation (*le-ovdah u-le-shomrah*) |

### Mitzvot Ben Adam Le-Chavero

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<th>Jewish Practice Fluency Benchmarks—Mitzvot Ben Adam Le’Chavero</th>
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<td><strong>Category</strong></td>
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| **Interpersonal Mitzvot and Concepts** (General) | • Acting towards others in ways that are consistent with *mitzvot ben adam le-chavero*  
• Having a regular and consistent *chesed/tikkun olam* practice  
• Listening to others empathetically  
• Prioritizing the needs of others above own needs when appropriate | • Distinguishes between *mitzvot ben adam la-Makom* and *ben adam le-chavero*  
• Connects ethical behavior to the concept that humans are created in God’s image (*Sotah* 14a, *Sifrei Eikev* 11:22)  
• Knows Hebrew terminology for interpersonal *mitzvot* (*hakhnasat orchim* is how to say “hospitality”) |
| **Gemilut Chasadim** | • Giving *tzedakah* (money/food/other goods)  
• Visiting or calling sick friends and relatives  
• Paying *shiva* visits when appropriate and waiting for mourner to begin talking  
• Showing preference to guests, offering them food first, giving them first choice | • Knows concept of *ma’aser* and Rambam’s *tzedakah* ladder  
• Knows that *tzedakah* is often collected as part of daily *Tefillah*  
• Can explain the concept of *chesed shel emet*  
• Connects *hakhnasat orchim* with Avraham and Sarah |
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<th>Category</th>
<th>Practices to be Cultivated*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interacting with Others</strong></td>
<td><strong>Kevod Ha-Briyot</strong> (overarching value) • Avoiding humiliating others • Kibud Av Va-Em • Respect for Elders • <em>Teshuvah</em> and <em>Mechilah</em> (lo tikom ve-lo tittor) • <em>Tokhechah</em> (feedback from a place of caring) • Judging others fairly • Shmirat Ha-Lashon • <em>Lifnei Iver</em> (relating to people with disabilities) • Good manners/civility</td>
<td>• Interacting respectfully and politely with peers and adults • Showing extra respect towards parents and elders • Apologizing after doing something wrong • Forgiving when others apologize • Considering others’ feelings when giving them feedback • Giving others the benefit of the doubt • Avoiding speaking about others • Helping those with disabilities</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Honesty</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ona’at devarim</strong> and <strong>genevat da’at</strong> • Truth and permitted lies • <em>Ona’at Mamon</em>/Theft • Hashavat Aveidah</td>
<td>• Interacting with others in an honest way • Making an effort to return lost objects</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Character Traits</strong></td>
<td><strong>Humility</strong> • Anger • Envy • Hatred • Revenge • Gratitude</td>
<td>• Reflecting on how one’s feelings and character traits influence one’s behavior • Articulating strategies for coping with anger, envy, hatred, and desire for revenge • Expressing gratitude when appropriate</td>
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</table>

* As stated above, interpersonal *mitzvot* are often aspirational; students (and adults) are always on a path towards increased and improved performance of them. Therefore, these practices are described as “Practices to be Cultivated,” rather than “Practices to be Mastered.”
Curriculum Considerations

As stated above, the fluency categories do not specify what Jewish practices to teach in which grades, nor do they suggest a methodology for teaching Jewish practice. These decisions are best left to individual schools as schools differ in their pedagogical approaches and in the values, ideologies, and priorities which guide their curricula. However, because these categories alone are difficult to implement, the sample curriculum maps below offer models of how a school could organize its Jewish practice curriculum in order for students to achieve fluency in Jewish practice. The first map provides a model for teaching holidays, using Sukkot as an example, demonstrating how different aspects of Sukkot could be taught in each grade from N–8. Schools that decide to stop teaching holidays in depth in middle school could combine themes from those grades with those from earlier grades. The second map provides a model for teaching non-holiday mitzvot and is based on the approach of teaching in-depth units on several of these topics each year.

We can imagine teaching Jewish practice as its own class or integrating it into other subject areas, as outlined below.

Separate Class

- In this model, Jewish Practice would be its own class with a curriculum that would cover the categories listed above. One logical way to organize the curriculum would be to schedule the learning about different holiday observances to coincide with those holidays and to fill in the rest of the year with other topics. Learning about many holiday observances would be repeated year-to-year while other topics (lifecycle, ethical mitzvot) might only be taught once or twice in a student’s school career.

- We recommend allocating one hour per week to teaching Jewish practice in this model and borrowing time from other text classes (Tanakh, Torah She-Be-Al Peh, Iyun Tefillah) in order to increase to two or three hours in Elul/Tishrei, the week before Chanukah, the week before Purim, and between Purim and Pesach.

Integration into Other Subjects

- In this model, teaching Jewish practice would be integrated into other subject areas. For example, a Tefillah curriculum could cover the “Daily, Shabbat, and Holiday Tefillot and Berakhot” section of the list of Jewish practices. A Torah She-Ba-Al Peh curriculum could be constructed to cover Shabbat, kashrut, lifecycle, and ethical mitzvot. As many topics on the list explicitly appear in the Chumash or could be thematically connected to stories in the Chumash, either a Chumash curriculum or a Parashat Ha-Shavua curriculum could be used to teach Jewish practice. While this approach allows for a more holistic teaching and learning experience in which Jewish practice is woven into many aspects of learning, it is more difficult to ensure that all areas of Jewish practice are actually taught, and requires
greater coordination on the part of teachers and curriculum directors/Jewish studies directors.

- We recommend increasing the time spent teaching other Jewish studies by one hour to reflect the hour intended for teaching Jewish practice. Similar to the “separate class model,” we recommend increasing the time dedicated to teaching Jewish practice in advance of major holidays.

### Sample Curriculum Map for Sukkot

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Skills/Content*</th>
<th>Learning Activities/Texts</th>
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| N     | Knows that Jews eat in a sukkah  
Can identify a sukkah in a picture  
Can identify a lulav and etrog  
Knows that Israelites lived in sukkot in the wilderness | Neighborhood walk to find sukkot and notice features  
Retelling of Exodus story with emphasis on wandering and living in sukkot  
Imitating teacher shaking arba’at ha-minim  
Eating in a sukkah on Sukkot and saying berakhah “le-shev ba-sukkah” |
| K     | Can say the berakhah “le-shev ba-sukkah” when prompted  
Can describe main features of a sukkah (temporary, skhakh, at least two walls) | Neighborhood walk to find sukkot and identify features  
Retelling of Exodus story with emphasis on wandering and living in sukkot (include reading of Vayikra 23:42–43)  
Imitating teacher shaking arba’at ha-minim  
Eating in a sukkah on Sukkot and saying berakhah “le-shev ba-sukkah” |
| 1     | Knows different names of Sukkot  
Knows that Sukkot celebrates harvest  
Can independently name arba’at ha-minim  
Can shake arba’at ha-minim with prompting from teacher  
Can retell the story of the Exodus and connect it to Sukkot | Text—Vayikra 23:42–43 to anchor retelling of Exodus story with emphasis on wandering and living in sukkot  
Matching names of holiday to pictures/themes  
Shaking arba’at ha-minim with berakhah  
Eating in a sukkah on Sukkot and saying berakhah “le-shev ba-sukkah” |
| 2     | Knows the symbolism of arba’at ha-minim  
Knows which foods are required to be eaten in the sukkah | Text—Vayikra 23:40  
Midrashim about arba’at ha-minim corresponding to parts of body and different types of Jews |
Sample Curriculum Map for Sukkot

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Skills/Content*</th>
<th>Learning Activities/Texts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>• Can put Sukkot in context of agricultural holidays</td>
<td>• Study of biblical texts (e.g. Devarim 16:13-15) with emphasis on agricultural dimension and gratitude/joy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Can name the ushpizin</td>
<td>• Review of biblical “heroes” in connection to ushpizin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>• Knows that world is judged for rain on Sukkot</td>
<td>• Mishnah Rosh Ha-Shanah 1:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>• Can describe features of a kosher sukkah based on Mishnah Sukkah 1–2</td>
<td>• Study of Mishnah Sukkah 1–2 about different types of sukkot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>• Connects Sukkot with universalism through the seventy sacrifices which correspond to seventy nations</td>
<td>• Bemidbar 29:12–34 and parshanut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Can shake arba'at ha-minim as part of Hallel</td>
<td>• Liturgical text of hoshanot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>• Knows what activities to perform in the sukkah</td>
<td>• Study of halakhot of sukkot—when to eat in the sukkah, sleeping in the sukkah</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Discussion of what makes a dwelling permanent vs. temporary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>• Can discuss main themes of Sukkot—vulnerability, God's protection, harvest, gratitude, joy</td>
<td>• Revisit theme of gratitude/joy through study of rabbinic texts about Simchat Beit Ha-Sho'evah</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Contrast to study of Kohelet—explore different attitudes to material world and life</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Skills and content listed in earlier grades are assumed to be retained in later grades; this chart includes new content and skills only for each grade. Teachers should check for knowledge and review any skills and content not retained. Assume greater need to review in K, 1, 2.

Sample Curriculum Map for Non-Holiday Mitzvot

Unlike holidays which are often revisited every year, many other mitzvot apply equally throughout the year. Because they can be taught at different levels to all ages of children, schools should map out these topics, ensuring that each topic is covered at some point during a student’s career. In many cases, topics should be taught at least twice—once in younger grades and again in late elementary or middle school.

Below is a sample map for these topics which offers suggestions for which topics to teach in which grades. Certainly these topics can be taught in other grades as well (in fact, many of these topics connect at some point to Parashat Ha-Shavua and can therefore be reinforced every year through the study of the parashah); this map suggests when students should engage in in-depth study of the topic.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Shabbat—introduction          | N     | • Shabbat as culmination of creation
• Shabbat as day of rest
• Shabbat rituals—candles (reciting berakha for hadlakat nerot), Kiddush, two challot, Havdalah |
| Shabbat—rest and ritual       | 2     | • Shabbat as culmination of creation—Bereishit 2:1-3
• Shabbat as day of rest
• Reciting Friday night and Shabbat morning kaddush |
| Shabbat—melakhah              | 5 or 6 (timed with study of building mishkan) | • Distinguishing between positive and negative mitzvot of Shabbat
• 39 melakhot forbidden on Shabbat derived from the construction of the mishkan and that they relate to farming, making fabric, making leather, writing, building, fire/cooking, carrying
• Concept of an eruv for carrying
• Concept of oneg Shabbat
• Concept of muktzeh
• Reciting Shabbat liturgy
• Performing ritual practices of Shabbat—hadlakat nerot, Kiddush, Havdalah
• Singing Shabbat zemirot |
| Kashrut—introduction          | 1     | • Torah lists kosher and non-kosher animals, birds and fish
• Milk and meat may not be eaten or cooked together
• Activities around categorizing food—meat, dairy, pareve |
| Kashrut—animals, blood, shechitah and basar be-chalav | 4 or 5 | • Exploration of kashrut through mishnayot in Chullin
• Features of kosher mammals (split hooves and chew cud) and fish (fins and scales)
• Kosher birds are listed in the Torah
• Milk and meat may not be eaten or cooked together
• Exploration of laws of shechitah
• Can be a good example for introducing Torah She-Be-Al Peh—Torah only says animals have to be killed “as I have instructed you” (Devarim 12:21); the laws of shechitah are all oral tradition
• Blood may not be consumed
• Vayikra 17:14 and maybe cross-referenced with Bereishit 9:4 |
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</table>
| Kashrut—focus on ta’aamei ha-mitzvot or boundaries around food | 7 or 8 (timed with study of Vayikra or Devarim or in context of navigating identity in relation to non-Jews or in context of ta’aamei ha-mitzvot) | • Restrictions on food cooked by non-Jews and on wine and cheese produced by non-Jews  
• Bishulei nokhrim as part of a unit around Jewish identity/Jews and non-Jews  
• Exploration of reasons offered for laws of kashrut through rabbinic texts  
• Asking questions to ascertain kashrut status of a given food |
| Berakhot—Introduction | N/K | • Berakhot bless God for things we enjoy in the world and for mitzvot  
• Giving examples of different kinds of berakhot (for food/pleasure and for mitzvot)  
• Matching foods with appropriate berakhot  
• Reciting berakhot before food and before mitzvot  
• Reciting at least part of Birkat Ha-Mazon |
| Berakhot | 4 or 5 | • Revisit berakhot through study of Mishnah  
• Berakhot for natural phenomena and special events  
• Exploration of berakhot as acknowledgment of God’s role in the world |
| Lifecycle** | 6 | • Naming features of Jewish lifecycle events  
• Participating in Jewish lifecycle events when opportunities arise  
• Exploring the values underlying Jewish lifecycle events |
| Mitzvot Ben Adam Le-Chavero—introduction | N/K | • Using Hebrew terms for mitzvot ben adam le-chavero  
• Treating others with respect and kindness is a Jewish value  
• Giving tzedakah, calling friends who are sick, sharing toys with friends who visit  
• Apologizing and forgiving friends  
• Telling the truth  
• Articulating feelings, expressing gratitude  
• Concepts can be taught through Parashat Ha-Shavua, Jewish stories, and general literature (e.g. hakhnasat orchim through Avraham and Sarah) |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mitzvot Ben Adam Le-Chavero—focus on Pirkei Avot</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>• Exploration of <em>mitzvot ben adam le-chavero</em> and character traits through Pirkei Avot</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Listening to others empathetically</td>
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<td>• Prioritizing the needs of others above own needs when appropriate</td>
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<td>• Making an effort to return lost objects</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Interacting respectfully and politely with peers and adults</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Describing different <em>middot</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mitzvot Ben Adam Le-Chavero</strong>*</td>
<td>6 or 7</td>
<td>• Distinguishing between <em>mitzvot ben adam la-Makom</em> and <em>ben adam le-chavero</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Connecting ethical behavior to the concept that humans are created in God’s image (Sotah 14a, Sifrei Ekev 11:22)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Concepts of <em>ma’aser</em> and Rambam’s <em>tzedakah</em> ladder</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Concept of <em>chesed shel emet</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Exploring the tension between the values of truth and peace</td>
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<td>• Connecting interpersonal <em>mitzvot</em> with biblical sources and rabbinic sources</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Reflecting on how feelings and character traits influence behavior</td>
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<td>• Articulating strategies for coping with anger, envy, hatred, and desire for revenge</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Acting towards others in ways that are consistent with <em>mitzvot ben adam le-chavero</em></td>
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<td>• Having a regular and consistent <em>chesed/tikkun olam</em> practice</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Giving <em>tzedakah</em></td>
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<td>• Paying <em>shiva</em> visits when appropriate and waiting for mourner to begin talking</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Showing extra respect towards parents and elders</td>
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<td>• Considering others’ feelings when giving them feedback</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Giving others the benefit of the doubt</td>
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<td>• Avoiding speaking about others</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Helping those with disabilities</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Interacting with others in an honest way</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Sample Curriculum Map for Non-Holiday Mitzvot

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mitzvot Teluyot Ba-Aretz</strong></td>
<td>8 (if there is an 8th grade trip to Israel) 6/7/8 in connection with Parashat Behar or sections of Devarim</td>
<td>• Exploration of agricultural laws that apply to food grown in the Land of Israel, including shemittah, terumah, and ma’aser</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Bal Tashchit/Tza’ar Ba’alei Chayim** | 1     | • Knowing the terms bal tashchit and tza’ar ba’alei chayim  
• Connecting care for the earth and animals to the role of humans in creation (le-ovdah u-le-shomrah) |

*Skills and content listed in earlier grades are assumed to be retained in later grades; this chart does not always restate content and skills from previous grades. Teachers should check for knowledge and review any skills and content not retained.*

**Learning about Jewish lifecycle rituals is particularly well-suited for home and synagogue life, and we are ambivalent about whether it is effective at all to to teach it in school. If pushed, we would recommend including it in a middle school curriculum.**

***There must be an experiential component to learning interpersonal mitzvot. In younger grades, the classroom can often serve as the experiential learning space. Older students, however, need to engage in chesed or tzedek projects outside of the classroom community in order to learn mitzvot like nichum avelim or tzedakah.***

### Sources consulted in developing Jewish practice standards and benchmarks

- Beit Rabban Day School Curriculum Guide