

## **Peretz For Kids (Early Explorers 4-6 and Growing Learners 7-9)**

### **Introduction and Overview**

Why send your child to Peretz when there are so many other great Hebrew schools in Vancouver?

There are a lot of reasons why Peretz might work for you:

- ◆ *You are looking for an inclusive, non-dogmatic, secular approach to Judaism.*
- ◆ *You are looking for an intellectually rich education that doesn't just focus on Hebrew, Israel, Holidays and Bible stories, but teaches Jewish history, ethics, literature, culture, music, and art as well.*
- ◆ *Your family practices more than one faith or is not religious.*
- ◆ *You identify as a "cultural Jew."*
- ◆ *You want your child to learn in an environment which is truly open-minded and welcomes all points of view.*
- ◆ *Your child is not interested in Synagogue life.*
- ◆ *Torah, prayer and Israel are not the primary way your child connects to Judaism*
- ◆ *Your child has not found a connection to Judaism yet and you want them to find their own way into Jewish tradition and history, not have that way chosen for them.*

## **The Peretz Centre: Education, Tradition, Community, Tikkun Olam**

Peretz offers a secular approach to Jewish culture which emphasizes the humanist, progressive, and universalist aspects of our heritage. We focus on language, literature, art, music and dance, and ethics.

### **Community and Pedagogy at Peretz**

Parents are encouraged to be part of their child's education at Peretz. Assignments to be done during the two weeks between classes often involve parent discussion or assistance; the year is dotted with holiday celebrations for the whole family to participate in—Tu b'shvat and Passover community seders, Purimshpil and party, *tikkun olam* (healing the world) activities, picnics and Shabbat dinners.

### ***Family Education***

Our bi-weekly Family Education Sundays begin with a thirty-minute session where families of Early Explorers and Growing Learners join in songs, teachings about the annual holiday cycle, and insights from the weekly Torah portion discussed and debated in a lively, non-dogmatic manner where all points of view are welcome.

## **Early Explorers and Growing Learners Overview**

### **Growing Up at Peretz**

Education at Peretz is broken up into three cohorts: Early Explorers (4-6); Growing Learners (7-9) and B'nai Mitzvah (10-13 and up). The age ranges of the groups are approximate; which group is right for your child will be decided between you and the teachers.

Early Explorers and Growing Learners meet bi-weekly on the same Sunday. After gathering for learning, singing and activities together with their parents for the first half an hour, the two groups separate for the rest of the afternoon.

### **Early Explorers (4-6 years old): The Journey Begins**

*(Note: age ranges are approximate and parents and teachers will decide together which cohort is right for your child).*

Arts and crafts, songs and music, stories and language. Early Explorers learn foundational Jewish values of *menshlikhkayt* (good interpersonal behaviour, being a "mensh") and begin to know the rhythms, symbols, music and food of Jewish life. Activities are focused on craft, dance, song, play and story.

### **Growing Learners (7-9 years old): The Terrain Gets More Interesting**

Increased focus on language, stories, and Jewish values, holidays, Torah study, Jewish folklore, music and dance.

Module One: Language: By the end of their time in Cohort Two, children will be able to read Hebrew. This means that they will know all the Hebrew letters and vowels and be able to read vowelized Hebrew script. They will also learn some common Yiddish words and phrases and be familiar with the sound and cadence of the language.

Module Two: Holidays: Children will learn the basic stories and meanings of the Jewish holiday cycle- Tu b'Shevat, Purim, Pesach, Shavuot, Rosh Hashanah, Sukkot, and Hanukkah. Peretz has Tu b'Shevat and Pesach Seders every year, a *Purimshpil* (telling of the Purim story) and costume party, our own Sukkah and a Hanukkah party. All holidays are presented in a pluralistic, universalist and social justice-oriented way which emphasizes positive, progressive messages.

Module Three: Jewish Values: Children will begin to examine Jewish ethical values, exploring and debating topics like ecological stewardship, social justice, harmless speech, loving the stranger, multicultural understanding, and the importance of curiosity, learning and questioning. Children will also be introduced to the Torah and Rabbinic writings as literature—as the stories Jews have told about our history and crafted to explore what we thought and think is true about the world. Children will be encouraged to think and dialogue about how those values can be applied in their daily lives, families and the wider world.

Module Four: Folklore, Music and Dance: Children will learn Jewish dance and song, be introduced to stories from Jewish folklore, and practice arts and crafts. Stories from Yiddish, Sephardi, Mizrachi, and Falasha folklore will

be read and the students will enact plays in class where these tales come to life.

Children will learn traditional songs in Hebrew and Yiddish, Israeli dance and song, and contemporary English songs embodying the Jewish values of *tikkun olam* (repairing the world), peace and justice.

By the end of the Growing Learners program children have the foundation for a cultured Jewish life, and be well-prepared to dive deep into our two year B'nei Mitzvah program (see online or ask for B'nei Mitzvah handout for more information).