

## JCC BERKELEY AFTERSCHOOL AND CLUB J PARENT HANDBOOK 2022 - 2023



The JCC East Bay stands for equal rights and safety for people of all backgrounds and faiths. We welcome and support our diverse Jewish community, people of all religions, nationalities, and socioeconomic backgrounds, communities of color, people with disabilities, and the LGBTQ+ community.

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# From our Directors

Dear Berkeley Afterschool Parents,

Welcome to the JCC East Bay!

As a parent, your participation in your child's afterschool program is important. This Parent Handbook is a useful reference for procedures, weekly schedules and daily activities. All parents are encouraged to read through this parent manual and let us know if you have any questions.

The Berkeley Afterschool and Club J programs are located at the JCC East Bay, Berkeley Branch at 1414 Walnut Street. Berkeley Afterschool is for children grades K-3, and Club J is for children grades 4-5. In addition to our core activities, group programming, celebrations, and free play time, we also offer a wide range of specialty classes. Both programs are licensed child care programs through the California Department of Social Services.

We appreciate you joining our community. You can find our contact information below. See you soon!

All our best,

**Maria and Roxann**

# Important Contact Info

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# About the Program

## Philosophy

Our afterschool program creates a safe, affirming space where youth can be their authentic selves as they explore interests and passions, grow as students and community members, and continue to develop their place in the community and the world. We integrate a variety of activities into our daily schedule to encourage each child's curiosity, exploration, and imagination. We connect Jewish values (see below) with an anti-bias education to foster the social-emotional and critical thinking skills that are the foundation of lifelong learning. We honor and respect differences and use a culturally responsive approach to teaching, which includes materials, activities, and language to promote this. We work together to grow and build relationships, and connect to the larger Jewish community.

Our dedicated and caring staff help children make strong, lasting connections with peers and adults. We believe in giving children the opportunity to practice life skills such as cooperation, critical thinking skills through natural consequences, active listening, and problem solving. We meet each child where they are by encouraging them to practice taking risks and support them in building their resilience. We foster the respect and love for the outdoor environment, and we cultivate children's self esteem, sense of security, and belonging. We work to develop compassion and empathy in all children so they feel included, accepted, and valued.

The best part of not being in school is that we get to have a lot of fun! We get messy, act silly, move our bodies, and dive deeply into creative projects! There is lots of joy, and laughter throughout our day! Children and families will get introduced to themes within the Jewish holidays and every Friday the children and teachers share the joy of celebrating Shabbat.

## Core Jewish Values

**Respect & Loving kindness (*kavod & chesed*):** We practice every moment to be our best selves by respecting others and treating everyone with care and kindness. We learn with and from one another which helps us to understand others around us, and the impact of our words and actions.

**Curiosity and awe (*hit'orerut*):** We foster questions and endless explorations to help children discover and build connections with the world around them. We create environments for children to learn in new, fun ways and develop critical thinking skills.

**Responsibility (*tikkun olam*):** We understand and discuss the importance of our job as caretakers of our home and earth. By teaching and fostering accountability, we learn how to take care of ourselves, each other, and the world we live in.

**Justice (*tzedek*):** We empower children to advocate for themselves and to lead with compassion and empathy for others. We model positive ways to address conflicts and repair actions that have hurt others.

**Community (*kehillah*):** We work to build a sense of belonging within our classrooms and community with parents as partners and children as capable learners. We cultivate emotional competency, consent, and social growth that guides the foundation of new and lasting friendships.

**Welcoming and inclusive (*hachnasat orchim*):** We create an environment where everyone feels welcomed, respected, and valued. We teach from a culturally competent perspective by embracing and discussing differences as strengths, allowing everyone to be their authentic selves.

### **Shabbat and Jewish Holiday themes**

Every Friday we share the joy of celebrating Shabbat. This program typically involves storytelling, games, saying blessings over candles, challah and grape juice, and honoring a “Mensch of the Week” — a child who has been a role model of kindness, inclusivity, bravery, and/or helpfulness. Often we tell stories that correlate to the particular moment in the Jewish calendar that we are in, and revolve around themes of positive relationship with self, others, and the earth. We also have celebrations and activities around Jewish holiday themes that take place during the school year. The celebrations are typically centered around fun, inclusivity, and our core values. For example, on Purim, a holiday that involves merriment, costumes, and trickery, we might decorate masks, have a Berkeley Afterschool Costume Fashion Show, and discuss ways that children of any gender identity can wear whatever makes them feel good. On Purim it is customary to make *mishloach manot*—gift baskets of food for other people, and to give funds indiscriminately to those who need support. At BAS we can use this as an opportunity to work together to make gifts and also have discussions about the importance of lending support and sharing material resources with those in our community who are in need.

### **Anti-Bias Education**

The JCC Berkeley Afterschool strives to be reflective of the many identities in our community. We actively acknowledge, celebrate, and welcome families of all races, ethnicities, religions, nationalities, socioeconomic backgrounds, families of color, people with disabilities, and LGBTQ+ families. Using developmentally appropriate language, we discuss and respect differences. We want children to take pride in their identities and families, and begin to use critical thinking and problem solving to act against biases. We aim to inspire children to question their world and appreciate multiple perspectives. These discussions might come up in a group circle time, authentically during play, or through specific activities. We make sure to have a variety of representation in our books, images around the JCC, materials and activities. We will also talk about current events in a culturally responsive and developmentally appropriate way to give students space to process what is happening in their world.

# A Day at Afterschool

## Schedule

Berkeley Afterschool's hours of operation are Monday-Friday from 1:30pm to 6:00pm. Students arrive by the BUSD buses, and arrival times are TBD depending on the bussing schedule (usually between 1:30 - 3:30). We do two walking pickups at Berkeley Arts Magnet, one for the kindergarteners and one the rest of the students. Parents of children at any other school are responsible for dropping their child off once their school day is over.

The following schedule represents a general idea of how a day at Berkeley Afterschool goes:

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
1:00	TK+K Teachers Prep Time: Materials and Snacks	TK+K Teachers Prep Time: Materials and Snacks	All Teachers Prep Time: Materials and Snacks	TK+K Teachers Prep Time: Materials and Snacks	TK+K Teachers Prep Time: Materials and Snacks
1:45	1st-5th Teachers Prep Time: Materials and Snacks	1st-5th Teachers Prep Time: Materials and Snacks	Staggered Arrival: snack, opening circle, free play	1st-5th Teachers Prep Time: Materials and Snacks	1st-5th Teachers Prep Time: Materials and Snacks
2:30	Staggered Arrival: snack, opening circle, free play	Staggered Arrival: snack, opening circle, free play	Wednesday FUN	Staggered Arrival: snack, opening circle, free play	Staggered Arrival: snack, opening circle, free play
3:00	Student Choice Activities or Park	Student Choice Activities or Park			
3:40	Student Choice Activities or Park	Student Choice Activities or Park	Student Choice Activities or Park	Student Choice Activities or Park / Farmer's Market Trip	Student Choice Activities or Park
4:20	Student Choice Activities or Park	Student Choice Activities or Park			
5:00	Second Snack	Second Snack	Second Snack	Second Snack	Second Snack
5:15	Free Play	Free Play	Free Play	Free Play / Farmer's Market Activity	Student Choice Activities or Park
5:45	Clean Up	Clean Up	Clean Up	Clean Up	Clean Up
6:00	Sign Out	Sign Out	Sign Out	Sign Out	Sign Out

## Snack Sample Menu

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Apple sauce Rice rollers Banana	Fig bar String cheese Apple	Pita chips Hummus Banana	Yogurt Graham crackers Banana	Popcorn Granola Bar Apple

## Outdoor & Indoor Environments

Each day, children have the opportunity to participate in supervised outdoor and indoor activities. We offer a combination of curriculum & homework support, structured activities, elective classes (chugim) to choose from, and free play. We strive to create a safe and fun afterschool experience by giving our students different opportunities to work together in a group, make choices about structured and unstructured activities, have ample time to be outside, and build on their learning experiences at school. When at Live Oak Park, we use the playground, basketball court, field, and creek. Occasionally we take children on a walking field trip to a nearby location.

## Items From Home

PLEASE label all items that your child might bring to the JCC. This includes shirts, shorts, pants, sweatshirts, jackets, shoes, and backpacks. Proper labeling will assist us in returning misplaced items to their proper owner. Staff will make every effort to keep children's belongings together and to ensure that no child leaves any items behind. Nonetheless, we strongly discourage bringing any items of value to the JCC, as things get lost, broken, or possibly stolen. The JCC East Bay is not responsible for any lost items. Any type of toy or garment that depicts or is a representation of acts of war or violence, drugs, alcohol, racism, homophobia, or sexism is not allowed. Lost & Found items are collected and placed in a large bin in the afterschool area. At the conclusion of the school year, all unclaimed items will be donated to a charitable organization.

# Pick Up Procedures

## Pick Up at The JCC

- Parents will park and walk to the front entrance of the JCC East Bay. They will let the security guard know who they are picking up.
- JCC Security will call for the child over the walkie talkies.
- Teachers will let the child know they are being picked up, and will radio back that they child is being sent to the front door.
- Parents need to correctly sign out their child.

## Pick Up Elsewhere

- For walking field trips, parents and guardians will always receive an email letting them know where their child will be going, the route the group will be walking, the times they'll be in different locations, and a specific location for pick-up.
- For Live Oak Park, parents usually will not be notified beforehand, but will find out upon arrival that their group is at the park, and where they should meet their child for pickup.
- We will have a teacher at any specified location to sign children out.

## Authorized Pick Ups

- Only YOU can tell us who is authorized to pick up your child in your parent forms.
- If someone other than regularly scheduled and authorized on your Identification and Emergency Information Form is going to pick up your child, we must have notification of this in writing, in an email to the directors.
- The pick-up person will be asked for identification before we release the child to them.

## Absences

- Unreported absences can cause major delays for our programs. Please notify us of all absences and/or schedule changes, preferably via email.
- Voicemail will record your message 24 hours a day.

## Late Pick Up Policy

If you anticipate arriving late/after 6PM, please call the directors to notify. If you do not call, the director will call you and your emergency contacts to ensure someone is on the way to pick up your child. If we cannot get a hold of anybody, someone on staff will stay with your child for as long as we can. We reserve the right to call the non-emergency police to help us locate you and escort your child home. There will be a \$2 per minute late fee for each of the first 20 minutes late and \$5 for every minute thereafter. Please refer to your contract.

# Positive Guidance

As educators, our role is to be patient while the children practice their social skills. Positive guidance is proactive, to emphasize the positive in each child. Teachers are prepared to intervene quickly when needed to model and discuss appropriate behavior, responses, and language. We can take any situation and turn it into a teachable moment, allowing children to feel heard and understood, giving them tools to help regulate their emotions, and feel competent in handling conflicts.

We want to give all students the opportunity to express their feelings and emotions, and know that it is OK to feel any way they are feeling. Our goal is to teach them ways in which to express their emotions and needs pro-socially, to build their own self-control and take responsibility for their actions, not to have them behave through adult imposed control. When we offer peaceful, positive conflict resolutions and assist children in reflecting on and discussing their behavior, they will begin to learn to resolve their own conflicts. In any situation, we want to allow children the opportunity to improve their behavior and give them chances to make different choices the next time.

We work to create a positive and constructive atmosphere for the children by providing a routine to meet the needs of the children. We give them clear limits to set them up for successful positive behavior. When we involve children in the development of the rules, and we implement these consistently with group and individual discussions, it allows the children to take responsibility for their actions. We strive to teach the children that their actions have an impact on the environment and people around them, and we help them reflect and understand their own feelings and actions. We empower children to say “No, I do not like that”, “Please stop”, “Can I use it when you are done?”, “I need space”, and to come get a teacher if they need help solving a conflict. We believe that by acknowledging and encouraging prosocial behavior such as cooperation, taking turns, listening, and more, children will grow and develop skills that will enhance not only their childhood, but their entire lives.

# Standards of Behavior

## Student Behavior Agreements

The JCC East Bay is a place where all children can feel safe, nurtured and accepted. Being in a community means understanding that it's important to think about the whole group's needs in addition to our own! In order to facilitate a healthy and positive environment for all, the following behavioral standards of are expected for the students:

- We check in with a teacher(s) before leaving any space or entering a new area.
- We respect each other's personal space and bodies.
- We listen to instructions from teachers.
- We eat snacks outdoors only and we don't play while eating.
- We use respectful & appropriate language with teachers and groupmates.
- We use positivity to lift each other up and encourage each other.
- We clean up thoroughly after any activity before moving on to the next activity.
- We treat JCC materials and other people's items with care.
- We hang our backpacks & jackets on hooks, not on the ground.
- We take turns.
- We include new students in games and activities.
- We help friends when they need it.
- We follow community group agreements
- We do our best to solve conflicts peacefully, and ask teachers for support.

## Behavior Expectations

JCC East Bay Staff are here to create a positive environment for all involved. Ridiculing and teasing are not allowed. Aggressive and vulgar language is not allowed. Children are reminded of these policies in a gentle but firm manner. A student who compromises the effectiveness of the staff (e.g., uncooperative behavior, not listening, being in an unsupervised location) will partake in our 4-Step Model.

- **1st Step - Verbal warnings from teachers and directors:** Students will receive verbal warnings from teachers and directors to redirect them towards positive behavior. Parents will be notified at the time of pick up.
- **2nd Step - Parent Notification and Support:** When there are repetitive occurrences of any unacceptable behaviors, (teasing, physical aggression, not listening to instructions, etc.) directors will notify parents by phone call where they will be asked to chat with their students to redirect them towards positive behavior.
- **3rd Step - Student and Parent Contract:** If a student continues to partake in repetitive, negative behavior then the Director and Assistant Director will coordinate with parents to set up a plan for supporting the student. They will be asked to create and sign a behavioral contract. This contract will differ by student. Parents and students will need to meet with the Director and Assistant Director to create and sign the contract.

- **Step 4 - Suspension or Termination From Program:** If the student doesn't show improvement in behavior after the coordinated attempts to help support them then the student may be suspended or asked to leave the program permanently, especially if behavior is compromising the physical or emotional safety of other students or staff.

**Physical Violence, Aggressive Behavior, Racial Slurs, Non-Inclusive Language, and Damage to Property is NOT tolerated in the Afterschool Program.**

A student will be sent home immediately, with possible suspension or termination, if they are involved in a serious physical altercation or speak slurs to others. Graffiti and other damage to the facility may result in charging parents for the damage. We do not allow any type of toy or garment that depicts or is a representation of acts of war or violence, drugs, alcohol, racism, homophobia or sexism.

# Health and Safety

The safety of our children is our highest priority. Many staff members are certified in First Aid and CPR and have undergone training in safety and emergency procedures. Teachers will have a first aid kit and emergency binder at all times. We promptly investigate absences, and ensure that children are always provided with plenty of water and sunscreen. Teachers use a counting system to ensure the presence of all children in their group, especially while on field trips. The Afterschool Directors are in constant communication with staff regardless of their location (thanks to modern technology!) via walkie talkie and/or cell phones.

## Medication

If your child needs medication, an inhaler, or EpiPen, please provide the director with the following:

- Medicine, inhaler or EpiPen in the original container (no plastic bags!)
- Physician's note and prescription containing
  - Child's Name
  - Name of medication and what it is for
  - Medication instructions, dosage, and when it should be given to your child
- Administration of Medication Consent Form (director can give you this to fill out)

Medication will be dispensed only under the specific directions of a licensed physician. Please do not send any medication in your child's belongings. All over the counter medication will be administered at the indicated dosage and at the discretion of the Berkeley Afterschool Director, only after permission has been given by the parent or guardian of the child. Parents will always be notified by phone before any medication is administered, unless in an emergency situation.

It is crucial that you indicate any known allergies on your medical form. If your child appears sick, you will be called to pick them up.

## Injuries

For injuries such as scrapes and bumps, our teachers will fill out and send home a form called an "Accident Report" that provides:

- Information about where the injury is located.
- How it occurred and what care was provided.

For more serious injuries, someone will call to inform you of the injury. Additionally, an "Incident Report" will be completed and sent home.

## **General Health Policy**

The JCC East Bay reserves the right to refuse participation to any participant deemed by executive staff to be at elevated medical or emotional behavioral risk. The JCC East Bay also reserves the right to request clearance from a licensed medical or mental health professional at any time to allow child participation.

Contagious diseases must be reported as soon as the illness has been diagnosed so that other parents may be notified of the possible exposure. This includes Covid-19.

A child with the following symptoms may NOT attend Afterschool.

- Conjunctivitis (pink eye).
- Fever in excess of 100.0 degrees (must be fever free for 24 hours).
- Excessive sneezing or coughing.
- Unidentified rash.
- Ear infection not seen by a physician.
- Vomiting or diarrhea.
- Lice (please see Lice Policy below)
- Strep throat
- Chicken pox
- Flu
- Common cold

It helps us understand and care for your child if you keep us informed of factors of significance at home. These could include, but are not limited to, prolonged illness in the family, a parent being away, death closely affecting the child, moving, and of course, nice things, too!

## **Lice Policy**

The JCC East Bay follows the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Lice Policy. The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) recommends that schools and childcare facilities maintain an active educational campaign for parents on the accurate diagnosis and proper treatment of head lice cases to prevent transmission of lice in schools and reduce lost school days due to head lice infestation.

Head lice, while a significant nuisance problem, do not transmit disease to humans. Traditionally, head lice policies in schools emphasized that a child infested with head lice could not return to school until no nits were found in their hair (“no-nit” policy). There is no evidence that a no-nit policy prevents or shortens lengths of outbreaks (Pollack et al., 2000, Williams et al., 2001). The American Academy of Pediatrics, the National Association of School Nurses, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are all opponents of no-nit policies (Frankowski and Weiner, 2002; Schoessler, 2004). Furthermore, the “International Guidelines for Effective Control of Head Lice Infestations” state that “the no-nit policy is unjust as it is based on misinformation rather than objective science and should be discontinued” (Mumcuoglu, 2007).

CDPH recommends a no-lice policy. The essential components of a no-lice policy are the following:

- Early detection of head lice infestations through routine screening by parents.
- Treatment of children found to have live lice.
- Distribution of educational material to school staff and parents on head lice, nit combing, and treatment such as “A Parent’s Guide to Head Lice” brochure (available at local health departments and online:  
<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/healthinfo/discond/documents/2012headliceeng.pdf>).

### **Child Protective Services**

In the State of California, all professionals who care for children are required by law to report “reasonable suspicion” of child abuse to either a law enforcement agency or a county child protective agency. Our staff have been trained in assessing situations which may lead them to make a child abuse referral. We are committed to maintaining a safe environment for children and for serving our children and families in the best way we can. For situations in which we would have to make a referral to either law enforcement or protective services, we will attempt to make the process as supportive as possible.

### **Emergency Evacuation Procedures**

The JCC East Bay holds regular emergency drills with children in the event that there is a fire, earthquake, or other emergency. There is an Evacuation Plan and emergency supplies in every room at the JCC East Bay. Teachers are routinely trained on safety and emergency procedures. We will also use our email list and Textcaster, our emergency text messaging software, to send out communication, so please make sure all email contacts and cell phone numbers are up to date.

### **Schedule Changes**

If you wish to change your child's schedule, then a Schedule Change Form must be submitted to the Director of Berkeley Afterschool for approval. A Schedule Change Form is needed for any change in the designated days of the week your child is attending the program, or any increase or decrease (but not below 3) in the number of days per week your child is attending the program. All changes may take up to 15 days to process. Increasing or changing your schedule are subject to availability and require the approval of the Director, which approval may be granted or withheld in the JCC's sole discretion (if approved for an increase, the change can take place as soon as approved). Tuition will be adjusted and pro-rated as appropriate when such changes are made. There is a \$25 administrative charge for any schedule change.

**Early Withdrawal**

If you wish to withdraw your child from the Berkeley Afterschool program, then a Schedule Change Form must be submitted to the Director of Berkeley Afterschool. There is a \$25 administrative charge for processing this request. The deposit will be forfeited for any withdrawal before the end of the school year. In addition, you will be responsible for the next scheduled monthly installment payment after the date the withdrawal notice is received. (If we receive notice of withdrawal in writing on or before the 5th of the month, you will be responsible for the installment payment due on the 5th of the current month. However, if we receive notice after the 5th, you will be responsible for the installment payment due on the 5th of the following month.) Your child may attend the program until the end of the month following the month in which your last payment is received. We cannot provide refunds for annual prepaid enrollment.

**Termination**

The JCC believes that a positive and constructive working relationship between the Berkeley Afterschool program, its participants and their families is essential. Accordingly, we reserve the right to, at any time, terminate the enrollment of your child, or to decline to offer re-enrollment to your child, if, in our sole discretion, the child is deemed not an appropriate fit for the program, or we decide that your actions or inactions or those of any other adult affiliated with the child and/or the child's family, prevent a positive working relationship or interfere with the program. Unless otherwise agreed by the JCC, if your child's enrollment is terminated by the JCC the deposit will be forfeited. If you are paying by monthly installment, no refund will be provided. If you are paying by the single payment method, the JCC will refund you your prorated prepaid tuition.

# Jewish Holidays

The JCC East Bay is closed for the major Jewish and federal holidays. See below for an explanation of the Jewish holiday and the tradition(s) associated with each.

All Jewish holidays begin at sundown. If we are closed for Day 1 of the holiday, that means the day after the night when the holiday begins.

**Rosh Hashanah (Day 1 and Day 2):** Rosh Hashanah is the Jewish new year. People celebrate Rosh Hashanah with prayer, festive meals, and joyful celebration. People eat apples and honey and round challah during Rosh Hashanah, which are symbols of sweetness and the circularity of a year. The JCC observes (and is closed for) the first and second days of Rosh Hashanah.

**Yom Kippur:** Yom Kippur is also known as the Day of Atonement. This is the most important and holy day in the Jewish calendar. Yom Kippur takes place 10 days after Rosh Hashanah, and traditionally is a time when people pray and fast all day. The JCC observes (and is closed for) the day of Yom Kippur.

Together, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are known as the High Holy Days, or the High Holidays. The days in between the two holidays are known as the Days of Awe – 10 days of repentance and renewal.

**Sukkot (Day 1):** Sukkot is traditionally an agricultural holiday. During Sukkot, we build a *sukkah* (temporary outdoor dwelling). Traditionally, people eat, sleep, and pray in the *sukkah* for the entirety of the holiday. We shake the lulav and the etrog, representations of the different species, to honor creation. The JCC observes (and is closed for) the first day of Sukkot.

**Passover (Day 1):** Passover commemorates the story of the Israelites being freed from slavery in Egypt. We celebrate Passover by having a *Seder* – a traditional meal over a retelling of the Passover story. We eat unleavened bread called *matzah* to symbolize the haste in which we had to leave Egypt, therefore not having time to allow bread to rise. The JCC observes (and is closed for) the first day of Passover.

**Shavuot (Day 1):** Shavuot marks the day the Jews were given the Torah after their exodus from Egypt. Today, it is customary to mark the holiday by reading and learning Torah, and to eat dairy (because the Jews started observing Kosher, and cattle could not be slaughtered). The JCC observes (and is closed for) the first day of Shavuot.

The JCC is not closed for the minor Jewish holidays. See below for some of these minor Jewish holidays as well as explanations of each.

**Shabbat:** Shabbat marks the seventh day of the week in the Jewish calendar, and is Judaism's day of rest. We celebrate Shabbat from Friday at sundown to Saturday at sundown. Shabbat is observed in many ways. Some use no technology and do no work, and others have a Shabbat meal with *challah* (bread) to mark the end of their week. The JCC will generally not have programs on Friday nights through Saturday afternoons. The JCC preschool and afterschool celebrate Shabbat each week.

**Shemini Atzeret:** Shemini Atzeret is celebrated on the eighth day of Sukkot. We still may eat under the *sukkah*, and we rejoice with candle lighting, blessings, and festive meals.

**Simchat Torah:** Simchat Torah takes place the day after Shemini Atzeret, and is the commemoration of when the Jews received the Torah. Today, Jews celebrate by both concluding and then restarting the annual Torah-reading cycle.

**Chanukah:** Chanukah commemorates the miracle that happened after the Jews reclaimed the temple in Jerusalem from one of the mightiest armies on earth. They found just a small bit of oil to light the Temple's menorah (seven-branched candle), but the light miraculously lasted for eight days. Now, we celebrate this Festival of Lights for eight days and eight nights (with a nine-branched candle), and eat foods cooked in oil, like doughnuts and *latkes* (fried potato pancakes).

**Tu B'Shevat:** Tu B'Shevat is also known as the new year of the trees, and is a time where we celebrate the earth and our role of caring for the environment. We also have a *seder* (celebratory meal) where we eat the seven species endemic to the land of Israel.

**Purim:** Purim is a joyous holiday that commemorates the saving of the Jewish people from Haman, who was planning on having all of Persia's Jews killed. On Purim, we dress up in costumes and masks, drink alcoholic beverages, eat *hamantaschen* (triangular cookies shaped like Haman's hat), and exchange gifts of food and drinks (*mishloach manot*).

**Yom Hashoah:** Holocaust Remembrance Day

**Yom Hazikaron:** Israeli Remembrance Day

**Yom Ha'atzmaut:** Israeli Independence Day

## Shabbat Blessings

### Lighting Candles

Candles are lit to represent the dual commandments to remember and to keep the Sabbath. After lighting, we wave our hands over the candles to welcome in Shabbat. We cover our eyes, so as not to see the candles before reciting the blessing. We recite the blessing below:

Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu, melekh ha'olam  
asher kidishanu b'mitz'votav v'tzivanu  
l'had'lik neir shel Shabbat. (Amein)

Blessed are you, Divine Presence, spirit of the universe  
Who has sanctified us with Your commandments and commanded us  
To light the lights of Shabbat. (Amen)

### Grape Juice

Kiddush is recited while holding up a cup of grape juice.

Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu, melekh ha-olam  
borei p'ri hagafen (Amein)

Blessed are you, Divine Presence, sovereign of the universe  
Who creates the fruit of the vine (Amen)

### Challah

Ha Motzi is said before we eat the challah. We cover the challah (because it gets jealous that we bless it last). We remove the challah cover so that everyone can see it. At the JCC, we make a human chain so that everyone is touching someone who is touching the challah to bless it. After the blessing, we may eat bread and anything else around the table.

Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu, melekh ha-olam  
hamotzi lechem min ha'aretz. (Amein).

Blessed are You, Divine Presence, our God, Spirit of the Universe  
Who brings forth bread from the earth. (Amen)