

# 9th Grade Retreat Teaches Hebrew High Kids About Israeli Culture

On December 3 and 4, about 50 9th graders from Hebrew High gathered in Shalom Park to experience "The Spirit of Israel." Special guest, Akiva the Believer, opened the retreat with a drum circle. After dinner, the kids broke into groups where they wrote songs and poems, created performances, studied Torah code (gematria), learned about Israel and even made their own drums. The evening closed with another drum circle where everyone either danced or played a percussion instrument.

Sunday morning's sessions began with breakfast, followed by another drum circle. Then the students broke out into groups again where some perfected their creations from the night before, while others began new projects. The retreat closed with three video taped performances, two songs, a slam poem, and a drum circle with the newly-minted handmade drums.

Here are some pictures and the lyrics to the songs and poems our creative, brilliant, and spiritual 9th graders wrote during their retreat.



Eran Kreitman, Jordan Imbrey and Brett Winter write a heavy metal tune with the help of Ben Saul and Jared Morse.



Dancing at the drum circle with Akiva the Believer.

City of Gold by Jordan Imbrey, Eran Kreitman, and Brett Winter

I am the demon within you.  
Controlling your life is what I'm trying to do.  
I will take you over I've already begun.  
Unless you reach the gold city before I'm done.

Our world's spiraling into a pit  
Before with the dead we sit  
We've gotta go back, gotta return  
Time to get enlightened, time for the world to learn

We've gotta take all the biblical sinners  
And the corporate liars trying to make you someone's dinner  
We need to repost commandments of ten  
Before our world comes to an end

CHORUS:  
So breakdown civilization's flaws  
And give into God's laws  
Don't let your soul be sold  
Return to the city of gold (city of gold)  
Returning to times of old!  
City of gold!  
Jerusalem

In the city of gold we will find  
No more destruction a world of the kind  
And yet somehow they are just like us  
Israel is the only place we can still trust

Society is shooting to hell  
At the bottom our souls will dwell  
Unless we profess that we do believe  
And mercy our kind god will conceive

Repeat CHORUS

Periled by war  
but still remains a door  
to one Jew and every Jew more



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The day that we were born  
Was the day that we were blessed  
Now our land is plagued each day  
With violence and unrest

The gem on the sapphire sea  
We are longing to be free  
And to feel the embrace of God  
All we think about is peace

The ghosts that fought the war  
Over bloodstained fields they fly  
They all know it's just a scapegoat  
For the fear we feel inside

The gem on the sapphire sea  
We are longing to be free  
And to feel the embrace of God  
All we think about is peace

The world has plagued us greatly  
And we struggle with our grief  
But strength is always there for us  
And someday we'll be free.

By Leah Taub, Jess Rosenfeld,  
and Lauren Fine

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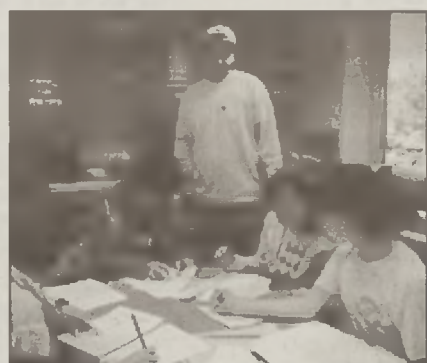
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Todd Swartz (standing) teaches (left to right) Adam Rosen, Blair Sly, and Lauren Whetstone about gematria.

**Four Jews and a Pencil**  
I say it loud  
I say it proud  
I'll stand up and gladly shout it out.  
I'm a Jew  
One of the few  
Comin' out of the blue  
That's just what we do  
I say it loud  
I say it proud  
The leader of Iran  
Thinks he has a plan  
To go and destroy our homeland  
I hope to go to the Western Wall  
I promise I won't let Israel fall  
I say it loud  
I say it proud  
I hope we are there for Israel

before and after  
Because it's not so sad if we have laughter  
When I bring this up, man, don't be lethargic  
Why? 'Cause I know, man, I'm Sephardic  
Promise me, be aware  
Whatever you do always care  
Remember God is always there  
Some people just don't understand  
What Jews are to the Promised Land  
I say it loud, I say it proud

By Lauren Eisendorfer, Kaleb Hopkins, Brad Winter, and Brett Winter