

L'Dor V'Dor: Grandparents Day at The Charlotte Jewish Preschool

By Becca Weiner

One of the most beautiful aspects of Judaism is the passing down of traditions from generation to generation. At holiday celebrations we recycle recipes handed down from our grandparents and we teach our children our family's customs. Each February at The Charlotte Jewish Preschool, we welcome our students' grandparents into our classrooms so they can watch the next generation in their family take on Jewish traditions. Our grandparents spend a morning with their grandchildren, our preschool students, learning how they spend their days in a Jewish setting.

Miss Miriam and Miss Liye are two of our full-day fours teachers who transform their classroom on Grandparents Day to showcase the talents and abilities of their students. They want their room to feel different because Grandparents Day is a celebration – it's not every day that our students get to bring their very special guests to school. Students prepare by decorating tablecloths and gathering special paper goods for snack.

Typically our classes have a craft because students and grand-

parents love having a keepsake from this special day. In the past, Miss Miriam's class has made clay tea sets and picture frames. She tries extra hard to capture memorable photographs throughout the event that can later be printed and sent home with the kids, so they have pictures to go in their photo frame.

The energy level in the classroom goes up any time there is a guest, but when our grandparents come to school it goes up a few extra levels. The children are so excited to share a day with their grandparents and are all over the room showing off their art work on the walls and their favorite centers to play in during the day. Grandparents are such special people to our students that they put all of their focus on showing off their classroom to their *sabas* and *safas*.

The highlight of Grandparents Day is our Shabbat service. Grandparents sit with their grandchildren and their classes and participate in our weekly Shabbat service led by Morah Becca and Miss Patti. From Bim Bam all the way to Oseh Shalom our students sing all the traditional Shabbat

songs as their grandparents kvell over them. Our students cover their eyes as we chant the blessing over the candles and hug the Torah as it is passed around.

Our students will enjoy Grandparents Day this year on Friday, February 13. This is one of our favorite days of the year.

Have your child enjoy special days like Grandparents Day. The Charlotte Jewish Preschool is currently enrolling for the 2015-2016 school year. We are happy to give you a tour at your convenience. For more information or to schedule a tour, please contact Alyson Kalik at akalik@shalom-charlotte.org or 704-944-6776. We look forward to meeting you. ♦



Charlotte Jewish Preschool

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"Your own offspring teaches you reason."

—Talmud: Yebamoth 63

Seize the Day School

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On the other hand, a kipah is just a kipah. I love the fact that Shoshi's growing up Jew-positive. It's been great experience, actually. Throughout Kindergarten, we slugged our way through various Hebrew-language picture books. At first it was great fun to try and decode the right-to-left volumes but then, one day, she asked, "Daddy, how come you don't read Hebrew the way you read English?" By which she meant: "Why so slow, Dad? And why don't you understand everything you read? These books are for toddlers!" I explained that Grandma and Pop didn't send me to day school and that I really had to teach myself Hebrew. But for her, it's becoming a natural part of her daily vocabulary.

"Lo la'gaat," she'll say to her little brother when he grabs for something he shouldn't.

"Tov!" she'll announce when she's happy.

"Lamah?" she'll ask, instead of "Why?" when we want her to do something that's not to her liking.

Her Hebrew is still basic, but it won't be for long. Shoshi has a friend in her class whose older brother is also Solly kid. The friend says, of Hebrew: "It's our secret language that our parents don't understand."

And there, *haverim*, is the Jewish-American rub. I fear becoming isolated from my child, the possibility that this education, while obviously good for her,

might pull her away from me. Which reminds me of something I read in a memoir about an American kid who leaves law school to become a speechwriter for Ariel Sharon. "In a way I blame my parents," he writes. "Their decision to enroll me in Jewish day school two decades earlier had set me on a path that would, almost inevitably, lead me either to law school or to the Israel Defense Forces." Now, do I really think that the road out of day school leads directly to the IDF or Law School? Lo. In fact, I can't begin to guess where Shoshi will wind up, and it's probably idiotic to worry about it. When I really use my Jewish head and set aside my fears, I must conclude that the day-school experience will make Shoshi a smarter and better person, and a more knowledgeable Jew. Hard to be ambivalent about that kind of thing, whether or not you're wearing a kipah. ♦

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