

Principal Corner for November 2nd **Interfaith Learning**

Last month, St. Cecilia Catholic School 5th/6th grade students, teacher Alexis Anjomshoaa-Brown, parent Rene Shannon and Principal Kilbane visited Congregation Kol Shalom on Bainbridge Island to learn about the history and traditions of the Jewish community. Prior to the visit students read Tirzah, the fictional story of a teenage girl's journey with the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt through their first years in the desert on their way to Israel.

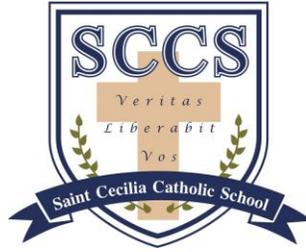
Once students sat down in the synagogue, Ms. Alexis introduced Judi Leader, "This is her congregation, where she comes to worship. This is her sacred space. She is our guide today. We will learn more about the Jewish culture and religion."

Prior to our visit, Ms. Judi Leader took a tour of SCCS prior and read the book Tirzah. She facilitated a very engaging experience for us.

Students eagerly shared that Shalom means hello and good-bye. They learned on this day that Shalom also means peace and completeness. They also learned a variety of Hebrew words throughout the morning.



Ms. Judi explained that the synagogue is a place of prayer, of gathering and of learning; students agreed that our Catholic church is a place for all three activities as well. She modeled how



people put on the prayer shawl and may stay totally covered for a few moments for contemplation or private prayers before settling it on their shoulders.

Ms. Judi shared that the essence of the Torah is *Do not do to anyone what you wouldn't want done to you*, very similar to the Catholic Golden Rule.

All Jewish holidays begin with the lighting of a candles. Judi explained the rituals connected to Shabbat which begins every Friday night at sunset. Students loved eating the traditional Challah bread she shared with them.



Students learned Yom Kippur is the Day of Atonement, the tenth day of repentance when one reflects on the past year and asks friends and family to forgive us for our mistakes and anything we did or said that hurt them in any way. Ms. Alexis pointed out that we participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Advent and Lent, which is a time of asking for God's forgiveness.

As students headed back to the school bus, they waved and bid our guide, Judi Leader, Shalom.

With joy,

Susan Kilbane