



Campers from Kids4Peace gather around a Torah scroll at Temple B'nai Brith before the start of Kabbalat Shabbat services led by Seth Weiss and Rabbi Eliana Jacobowitz. At right: Shoshana Freed Boardman (right) and her peace pal, who is Christian and an Arab.

24 kids bring down the walls

By Shoshana Freed Boardman

Editor's note: The writer of this column is a seventh grader at The Rashi School in Dedham.

Last month, I took part in a program called Kids4Peace, which brought together 24 Jewish, Christian and Muslim children from Jerusalem and Greater Boston.

This was the program's first year in the Boston area. We spent a week at a camp in New Hampshire and a week at Bentley College in Waltham. On the last Friday, we visited the Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center and mosque in Roxbury and then Temple B'nai Brith in Somerville, where we participated in Kabbalat Shabbat services.

It didn't matter where you were from, what language you spoke or what traditions you followed. There were no politics involved, and everything was based on learning from one another.

It was great to be in a program in which not everyone was American, to meet kids

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from far away and some who turned out to live close to my home.

I learned a lot about Islam, Christianity, and even Judaism. I realized that religion is about who *you* are, and how *you* read the words of your G-d, or gods, or interpret life in a way that suits you. You can't summarize something like religion; you need to see it, to feel it, before you know what it means.

One of the things that

struck me the most was watching the Adhan (the Muslim call to prayer), and the Muslims praying in general. When the Muslims prayed, it felt powerful. They put on scarves and special clothing. They rolled out their prayer mats and faced a certain direction, which Jews also do. The words were in Arabic for the most part, and it felt distant, but, again, powerful. The Christians praying also felt powerful, but in a different way because it was in a language I knew. I'm used to the Jewish prayers, so they were not so much powerful as they were warming.

I recommend this program to anybody who is 11 or 12 and who loves his or her religion, learning – and fun. You don't need to be a particularly religious person to get a lot out of it. To find out more, visit www.kids4peaceboston.org.