

TEMPLE BETH SHALOM

**RELIGIOUS
SCHOOL
HANDBOOK**

2017-2018

5778

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GENERAL INFORMATION

The Religious School at Temple Beth Shalom is dedicated to providing Jewish children with a firm foundation of Reform Jewish education from kindergarten through high school by creating community, instilling an appreciation for and celebration of Jewish identity, and inspiring a commitment to ongoing Jewish living and learning.

The TBS Religious School emphasizes Jewish ethics and values, holiday celebrations, social justice, history, the study of Torah and sacred texts, Hebrew language, prayer, and Jewish culture. We strive to create an environment of *Klal Yisrael* – a caring and active involvement in the temple, the local Jewish community, Israel, and with Jews around the world.

The dedicated faculty members of the Religious School bring to their classrooms a passion for Judaism and Jewish values, as well as deep regard for the individual worth of each student, recognizing varied learning styles and abilities. The TBS clergy and Director of Education are an integral part of the school through teaching classes, leading worship services, and facilitating intergenerational programs.

The Hochberg Academy at TBS is an innovative teen program for grades 8-12. It combines formal Jewish learning with memberships in our very active National Federation of Temple Youth (NFTY) youth group. **This program is funded by a generous grant from Stephen and Jane Hochberg.** Confirmation (in 10th grade) is a three-year program beginning in 8th grade, followed by an in-depth seminar with the Rabbi for juniors and seniors. The Hochberg Academy is facilitated by Rabbi Neil Amswych, Cantorial Soloist Meredith Brown, and Youth Director Ellen Zieselman. *See the Curricular Outline for more information.*

News Flash! For the second year, the TBS Religious School is thrilled to be awarded a grant from the Jewish Federation of New Mexico for a ground-breaking program called **Judaism Through the Arts**. In the first year of the grant, the students enjoyed hands-on workshops with a Jewish paper-cutting artist, experienced Middle Eastern drumming, and created KidsKlez, the only children's klezmer band in New Mexico! We co-sponsored (with the Santa Fe Jewish Film Festival) a screening of a very moving Holocaust film for teens and their parents at the Center for Contemporary Arts (CCA). This year, once again, our school community (grades K-12) will benefit from the abundance of Jewish artistic resources in the Santa Fe area to integrate a variety of Judaic arts into the curriculum. With the enthusiastic response from participants, under the leadership of director Deborah Ungar, KidsKlez will continue to grow. We have already begun an internship program for teen song leaders in the Sunday School, and will be developing a community-wide visual art installation.

Joy Rosenbergis the coordinator for Judaism through the Arts. Watch for more information!

CLASS SCHEDULE

Sunday School: Grades K - 3

Sundays: 10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Hebrew School: Grades 4 - 7

Sundays: 10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Wednesdays: 4:30 – 6:00 p.m.

The Hochberg Academy: Grades 8 - 12

Wednesdays: 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Tzedakah & Social Action: Giving is an important *mitzvah* (commandment) of Jewish life. On Sundays, children contribute money for *tzedakah* (literally “righteousness”), and at the end of the year each class decides where the collected money will be donated. Please discuss this *mitzvah* with your child, and encourage your child to donate a portion of his/her own money. The students consider a variety of possible recipients ranging from local to international organizations, which deal with issues such as homelessness, animal welfare, medical care, and hunger. You may request a copy of the booklet *Tzedakah Resources* from Joy Rosenberg. Suggestions for additions to the resource packet are always welcome. Each year's *tzedakah* recipients and amounts are announced at the final assembly in May. B'nei Mitzvah students (in 7th and 8th grades) choose hands-on *tzedakah* projects in consultation with their tutor. Hochberg Academy students often continue their involvement with the project chosen during b/mitzvah preparation. In addition, Beth Shalom Temple Youth Group (BSTY) coordinates a major food drive for Yom Kippur to support local organizations.

PJ Library Program: It's never too early to create treasured Jewish memories with your family! This initiative from the Jewish Federation of New Mexico aims to enrich the lives of young families with Jewish stories and songs. **Thanks to a generous gift from the Audrey B. Kaplan Memorial Fund**, each TBS child from 6 months through age 10 can receive each month, a high quality Jewish children's book, CD or DVD *free of charge!* You can register your child and get more information at pjlibrary.org.

Family Learning Days: Parents and children come together for shared Jewish educational experiences facilitated by the Director of Education or other members of staff. Each program includes learning and socializing as well as fun, thought-provoking, collaborative activities for parents and their children / teens. *Check the Calendar for dates.*

Meet the Rabbi: Rabbi Neil strives to meet with each class to give the students an opportunity to get to know him and to ask their questions.

Music: Sunday School students participate in regular music sessions with Music Director Aaron Wolf. He follows a graded curriculum, teaching traditional and contemporary songs for Jewish holidays and Shabbat, appropriate for each age group. This year two of our teens will be starting as junior songleaders!

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Preparation: In order to celebrate becoming bar or bat mitzvah at TBS, students are required to attend Religious School and Hebrew School (both Sundays and Wednesdays) regularly for a minimum of two years. The date of the ceremony is set in consultation with Cantorial Soloist Meredith Brown, usually in 6th grade. Each family will receive the **B'nei Mitzvah Handbook** and is required to participate in scheduled B'nei Mitzvah Family Education days on Sunday mornings. At TBS, nearly 100% of students continue their Jewish education after bar/bat mitzvah.

Special Needs: We pride ourselves on providing individualized attention to our students. It is essential that we have the maximum information concerning your child's special needs so that we can provide him/her with the best Jewish education possible. **Parents are urged to speak with the Director of Education and the child's teacher before school begins,** and to provide a copy of the IEP, if applicable.

Worship Services for Children:

- **Children's High Holiday Services** are conducted by the BSTY Youth Group, coordinated by Youth Director Ellen Zieselman. Services are held on Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur mornings at 10:00 in the Upper Sanctuary.
- **Youth Service** is a beautiful family-friendly Friday evening Kabbalat Shabbat conducted by Youth Group members. Hebrew School students (grades 4-7) lead some of the prayers. *See the Religious School Calendar for dates.*
- **Friday Night Live!** Don't miss this lively musical Friday night service (generally the last week of the month) that appeals to children and adults of all ages. *Check our website for dates: www.sftbs.org.*

Volunteering: We depend on parents and grandparents to support Religious School programs by volunteering in small and large ways. This is an opportunity to become more involved in your child's Jewish education while meeting other TBS parents and having fun! There are many ways to make a difference, no matter how much time you have to give. **Please plan to attend the Shalom Sunday Café on the first day of Sunday School.**

SCHOLARSHIPS

Religious School Scholarship: It is the policy of Temple Beth Shalom that no child is turned away from a Jewish education for financial reasons. *Please note that scholarships are NEEDS-BASED and a confidential written application is required.* Contact the Director of Education for more information.

Israel Scholarship: North American Federation of Temple Youth (NFTY) gives every TBS teen a certificate good for \$250 towards a NFTY trip to Israel.

Thank you to Billy Feldman for his ongoing support of both scholarship programs!

SCHOOL POLICIES

Enrollment: Placement in the Religious School and the Hochberg Academy is based on the child's secular school grade. **TBS membership is required after the child's first year in the school.** Registration starts in April for the following year, with an early-bird discount available until the Community Picnic in mid-May. However, new students are welcome to enroll throughout the year.

Academics: Parents and students should acquaint themselves with the curricular objectives for the appropriate grade. Progress reports are emailed to the parents twice a year. If remediation is necessary, it will be provided during school hours *whenever possible*. **Please inform the Director of Education of your child's special learning, medical or developmental needs,** and arrange a discussion with the child's teacher.

Arrivals and Departures: Children may be dropped off on the sidewalk or the parent may park in the lot and escort the child to class. **Do not leave your car in the fire lane!** Students in grades K-1 must be walked to class by an adult and picked up from the classroom after school. **For the safety of all children, no cell phone use during carpool!**

Snacks: Sunday snacks are provided by parents on a rotating roster. Your child's teacher will email a snack list after the first class session. Please be sure to provide a healthy snack for your child's class, ready to serve, with all needed paper goods and utensils. No nuts, shellfish or pork! **If your child has serious allergies or food sensitivities, be sure to provide that information on your Registration Form.** *For Hebrew School snacks, see Homework Club, below.*

Homework Club: Hebrew School students (grades 4-7) may participate in the Homework Club on a drop-in basis. We meet from 3:30-4:25 pm in the Social Hall on

Wednesdays when school is in session. Adult supervision is provided. Children may do their homework, read or visit quietly. Reasonably healthy packaged snacks are available for a small fee. All snacks must be eaten or put away before class begins.

Illness: Should your child become ill while at school, we will dispense band-aids and TLC, but we cannot administer any medication (including Tylenol). When necessary, we will contact the parent or others listed on the emergency form to pick up the child. **Please make sure your emergency contact information is current!**

Guest Policy / Visiting the Classroom: Parents are always welcome to visit the classroom; however, we request prior notification. If your child wishes to bring a friend or relative to class, permission must be obtained from the Director of Education and the teacher. The parent / responsible adult **must** be reachable while the guest is on the premises.

Cancellation: The Religious School follows the Santa Fe Public School schedule. If SFPS has a snow day or early dismissal on a Wednesday, we also will cancel. In the event of severe weather or other emergency on a Sunday morning, you will be contacted via email, phone or text. **If in doubt, you are welcome to call or text Joy Rosenberg: 832.746.0523.**

CODE OF CONDUCT

Temple Beth Shalom is both a House of Worship and a House of Study. The goal of the Code of Conduct is to help maintain an environment of *Derech Eretz*, the correct and caring way to behave towards others.

PLEASE READ AND DISCUSS WITH YOUR CHILD.

Students at Temple Beth Shalom have the following rights and responsibilities:

1. To be respected as unique individuals;
2. To express opinions without ridicule;
3. To speak without interruption;
4. To be courteous and respectful to their peers and teachers.

Teachers at Temple Beth Shalom have the following rights and responsibilities:

1. To be respected as unique individuals;
2. To be treated as professionals;
3. To speak without interruption;
4. To be courteous and respectful to their peers, supervisors, parents and students;
5. To adhere to the terms of their yearly contract.

In all cases of behavioral difficulties, the teacher will inform the Director of Education immediately. Confidential records will be maintained. The discipline procedure is as follows:

1. **First incident of misbehavior**: The teacher will discuss the problem with the student, and give a warning (unless misbehavior is so severe that the child must be removed from the classroom immediately).
2. **Second incident**: If necessary, the student will be removed from the class and escorted to the office (accompanied by an adult or aide). The parent will be called to discuss the situation and possible resolutions.
3. **Third incident**: The student will be escorted to the office. The parent will be contacted. If circumstances warrant, s/he will be asked to pick up the student. A meeting will be arranged with the student, parent(s), teacher and Director of Education.

Certain offenses will result in immediate removal from the school:

- Theft
- Vandalism
- Smoking
- Use or possession of drugs, alcohol, harmful or dangerous objects
- Violence or threat of violence to others
- Placing self and/or other students in danger
- Extreme disruption in the classroom

Please note: Cell phones must be silenced and not used during class except with permission from the teacher.

CURRICULAR OUTLINE

SUNDAY SCHOOL: Grades K - 3

Primary classes meet on Sundays only. The curriculum presents key Jewish concepts, woven into a warm and nurturing program: God, holidays, prayer, values, Israel, temple, *mitzvot* (commandments), and *tzedakah*. Music, art, stories, a bit of Hebrew, and movement are all a part of the curriculum. Both teachers and students have access to the beautiful books in the Children's Library.

Kindergarten

- Study of the Jewish holidays and Shabbat begins with stories, songs and activities. Parents also enjoy the colorful folders of *Let's Celebrate* for each major holiday.
- *A Child's Garden of Torah* provides child-friendly Torah stories with colored stickers and fun activities in each take-home lesson.
- Children are introduced to an exploration of *mitzvot* (commandments) through hands-on learning in *Jewish and Me: Mitzvot*.
- Kindergarten students and their parents participate in a Family Learning Day in the Fall.

First Grade

- Study of the Jewish holidays and Shabbat continues with stories, songs and activities. Parents also enjoy the colorful folders of *Let's Celebrate* for each major holiday.
- *A Child's Garden of Torah* provides child-friendly Torah stories with colored stickers and fun activities in each take-home lesson.
- *Let's Discover the Synagogue* introduce students to the people and objects that they encounter at TBS.
- First Grade students and their parents participate in a Family Learning Day in the Fall.

Second Grade

- The Hebrew pre-primer *Now I Know My Alef-Bet* guides students in letter recognition skills and beginning Hebrew vocabulary.
- Classic Bible stories are presented charmingly in four-page packets through *Let's Discover the Bible*.
- In *Experiencing the Jewish Holidays*, students learn to actively celebrate the holidays. Role play, cooking, and many other activities are included.
- *The Great Israel Scavenger Hunt* introduces Israel to young children in an exciting and interactive manner.
- Second Grade students and their parents participate in a Family Learning Day in the Fall.

Third Grade

- *Shalom Alef Bet* prepares the students to begin Hebrew School next year. They become familiar with Hebrew letters and vowels and develop basic decoding skills.

- *Welcome to Israel!* takes students on an informative and fun-filled "tour" of Israel, including history, geography, commerce, and cultural life.
- Students are offered a comfortable way to consider Jewish concepts of God through the ground-breaking book *Partners with God*. Children will explore ideas of holiness and discover a Jewish vocabulary for thinking and talking about God.
- A highlight of the year is the **Hebrew Name Ceremony**, in which each student introduces him/herself to the congregation using his/her Hebrew Name. The Family Learning Day in preparation for this event is a very memorable experience!

HEBREW SCHOOL: Grades 4 - 7

Children in grades 4-7 attend Religious School twice a week (both Sundays and Wednesdays). Learning intensifies and becomes more sophisticated in all subjects. By the end of fourth grade, students are able to read prayers and write in Hebrew. Other areas of focus include Bible (Torah, Prophets, and Writings), text study, ethics and *mitzvot* (commandments), life cycle, Israel, and Judaic arts. Holidays are explored from an increasingly adult perspective, teaching the children that Jewish study is a lifelong endeavor.

Fourth Grade

- The students work hard but have fun as they concentrate on acquiring Hebrew reading and writing (block printing) skills. The text for *Alef* level Hebrew is *Shalom U'vracha*.
- *Jewish Holidays, Jewish Values* invites students to explore Jewish values in journal format through holiday traditions and stories. Connections are made between Jewish traditions and their everyday lives.
- Whether triggered by a cousin's wedding, a sister's bat mitzvah, or a grandparent's funeral, children have questions about life cycle events. *Journey of a Lifetime* covers some of the most significant milestones in a Jewish life.
- *Artzeinu: An Israel Encounter* encourages students to go beyond geography to discover the country's peoples, history and cultures. Each chapter presents Israel through historical, Biblical, cultural and narrative lenses, offering students and teachers the chance to engage meaningfully with the Jewish homeland and all of its challenges.
- A highlight of the year is the **Hebrew Name Ceremony**, in which each student introduces him/herself to the congregation using his/her Hebrew Name. The Family Learning Day in preparation for this event is a very memorable experience!

Fifth Grade

- *Rediscovering the Jewish Holidays* invites students to enrich our tradition by making their own contributions to meaningful Jewish observance.
- In the *Building Jewish Identity Series*, students establish a foundation for lifelong Jewish engagement. They focus first on sacred texts (Torah and Talmud) and discover why we are known as the "people of the book."

- The Hebrew text used in *Bet* level 5th and 6th grades is the prayer book *Mishkan Tefillah*, the same *siddur* (prayer book) used for adult services - but the version used in class does not include transliteration. In *Bet* level Hebrew class, students become familiar with two dozen prayers they will learn for the bar/bat mitzvah service. In this challenging, self-paced class, taught by Joy Rosenberg, each student is tested individually for reading and writing competency. Melodies are introduced and the meanings of the prayers (and of prayer itself) are discussed.
- The fifth grade students and their parents will participate in a Family Learning Day.

Sixth Grade

- What is *haftarah*? Not "half a Torah." In fact, *haftarah* contains portions of the Bible from the Book of Prophets. Students will study several of these prophets during the course of the year. They consider the nature of prophecy, historical perspective, and segments of the biblical texts, using the packets *Think Prophets*.
- *Living as Partners with God* will help students to honor the Covenant and add to life's holiness through performing *mitzvot* such as giving *tzedakah*, studying Torah and observing Shabbat.
- In this pre-B'nei Mitzvah year, students focus on specific prayers they need to learn for Bar/Bat Mitzvah. See *description of fifth grade Hebrew, above*.
- B'nei Mitzvah Family Learning Days are held throughout the year for sixth grade students and their parents. Attendance is required. See *Religious School Calendar for the dates*.
- Families receive the dates of bar/bat mitzvah and the *B'nei Mitzvah Handbook*.

Seventh Grade

- For most students, this is the year of becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah; it is essential for teachers and parents to emphasize that adult Jewish learning *begins* with B/Mitzvah!
- Ellen Zieselman says: "Sundays are about connecting the dots. This is the year when history, Bible stories, holidays and liturgy start to make sense as parts of a larger Jewish understanding. The focus is on questions: questions we ask of the Torah during Torah Study, questions the students have about ritual practice, and the larger questions of 'what does it mean to be Jewish' and 'how can we be Jewish and American in 21st century Santa Fe, NM?'"
- Meredith Brown says: "On Wednesdays students gain a deeper understanding of what it means to become a Bar or Bat Mitzvah in our unique community. Our focus is on the meaning of prayers, the order of services and HEBREW. We look carefully at Hebrew roots and commonly-used Hebrew phrases."

THE HOCHBERG ACADEMY: Grades 8 – 12

The Hochberg Academy at TBS helps students explore their identities as contemporary Reform Jewish teens, and encourages them to take their rightful roles as active adult members of the Jewish community. The Hochberg Academy assists students in developing a strong foundation of Jewish ethics, knowledge, and spirituality, to support them as they confront the many challenges of college life and adulthood. Taught by Rabbi Neil Amswych, Cantorial Soloist Meredith Brown and Youth Group Director Ellen Zieselman, these interactive discussions become very lively!

Thanks to a generous grant from Stephen and Jane Hochberg, TBS teens have the opportunity to engage in sophisticated Jewish learning while also participating fully in our vibrant BSTY youth group. Fees for the program include classes, youth group membership, and a light dinner every week. The Hochberg Academy meets on Wednesdays from 6:00-7:30 pm.

All post B'nei Mitzvah students are invited to apply as *Madrichim* (teen assistants) in the Religious School on Sunday mornings and/or Wednesday afternoons. All *Madrichim* must be registered in the Hochberg Academy.

Core Values

- Strong personal connection to Judaism
- The importance of community / How to be a valuable member of a community
- Teen Family Learning Days (see the school calendar for dates)
- Familiarity with Shabbat and holiday ritual, prayers, Torah
- Empowering students to find answers for themselves

Sample Topics

- Moral / ethical decision-making with reference to Jewish sources
- Jewish History
- Tikkun Olam: Repairing the world
- Essential Jewish texts: Torah, Talmud, Midrash
- Judaism 101 – Tools for the Road
- Israel: History, culture, society, issues
- Comparative Judaism & Comparative Religions