

Beth Shalom Congregation

Religious School Guide

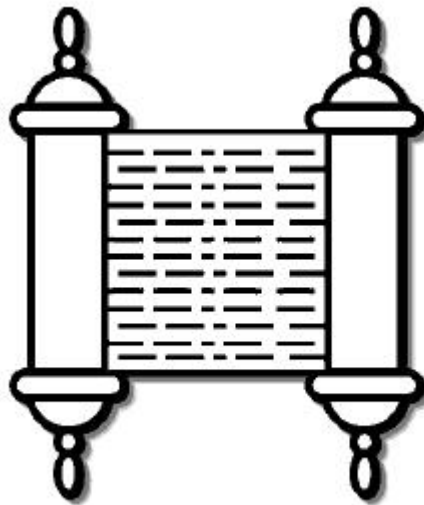
2009-2010

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*“And these words which I command
Thee this day shall be in Thy
Heart, Thou shalt teach them
Diligently unto thy Children. . .”
(Deut.6:7)*

WELCOME

We are delighted to be starting another exciting year in our religious school. Jewish education has been the cornerstone of our existence throughout our long history, and is the foundation for the future of our community. Our goal is to instill in each student a love for Judaism and a knowledge of its history and rituals, which will enable him or her to live a Jewish life.

Beth Shalom Education Committee

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BETH SHALOM RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

MISSION

The mission of the Beth Shalom Religious School is to educate our children in Jewish customs, rituals, history, scripture, language, and prayers in an environment where together with other children a student will experience the principle of community, which is at the essence of the Jewish tradition. Youth programming will provide a means for socialization and the further establishment of a Jewish identity so our children will choose to remain active, contributing members of the Jewish community.

VISION

The vision of the Beth Shalom Religious School is to maintain high quality programming while being responsive to the needs of our children. We will continue to expand our parent and family oriented education and to broaden our youth programming. The Education Committee will continue to be responsive to the needs of our families.

SCHOOL POLICIES

ENROLLMENT AND REGISTRATION

All children of Beth Shalom Congregation members have the privilege of enrolling in our outstanding Religious School. Our Religious School consists of three departments - Primary (Pre-K through first grade), Secondary (second through seventh grade) and High School-Beit Midrash (eighth through eleventh grade).

Congregations who do not provide educational services for their children may make arrangements to have their children attend Beth Shalom Religious School. Please contact the Synagogue Education Committee Chairperson for more information.

FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY

1. All previous synagogue financial obligations must be paid before a child may be registered for school each year.
2. The fee for registration for the Religious School is to be paid as you register your students.

The Registration Fee is \$100.00 per student or \$150.00 for families with multiple students.

3. Annual school fees for 2008-2009 are as follows:

Tuition..... \$450.00

4. Bar/Bat Mitzvah training fee \$300.00

Full tuition must be paid regardless of length of attendance. Should there be financial difficulties, please contact the Education Committee Chair for special arrangements.

ATTENDANCE

To be promoted to the next grade, a pupil is expected to be present for Religious School sessions and Junior Congregation Services. The promotion of a student who is absent for more than 10% of his/her classes and/or services **MAY BE DENIED**, at the discretion of the Education Committee and the rabbi. At each class session, the teacher will prepare an attendance report indicating who is absent from class/service. Pupils who miss class work are expected to get their assignments and to complete their homework **PRIOR** to their return to school.

After two successive absences or tardiness, a parent will receive a call from the school. In the case of frequent tardiness or absence, a conference will be arranged between the parents of the pupil and the school administration. If a satisfactory result cannot be achieved, the situation will be resolved by the Education Committee and school administration.

Homework is required. A student who does not complete homework will be required to attend Wednesday afternoon to complete work with teacher supervision.

JUNIOR CONGREGATION

In an effort to make services more relevant and meaningful to the students, we offer junior congregation. In order to be passed into the next grade level, the student must be in good standing academically, must exhibit an acceptable demeanor in the religious school and at services, and meet their religious school and service attendance requirements. All students in the Beth Shalom Religious School are required to attend Religious services a minimum of 20 times per school year.

The following services count towards fulfilling the requirements:

- Friday night services
- Saturday morning Junior Congregation
- Saturday morning services
- Holiday services - Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Simchat Torah, Pesach, Shavuot, and Purim.

Attendance at Sabbath and holiday services is an integral part of the children's curriculum and is a necessary prerequisite for passing into the next grade.

When a student attends services at another synagogue in town or out of town, a note should be sent to school.

Failure to meet service requirements will keep the student from passing until the missed number of services is made up during the summer as specified by the rabbi and the school administration.

STANDARDS OF PUPIL PROMOTION

Pupils will be expected, consistent with their abilities, to achieve an understanding of materials covered in class. Satisfactory performance on all assessments is required of all pupils for promotion. Pupils will not be promoted until they have achieved the satisfactory attendance requirement set forth above.

RECOGNITION OF ACHIEVEMENT

At the end of each school year, recognition will be given to outstanding students in a variety of categories.

1. Outstanding Student of the Year - Recognizing the student who exemplified Jewish life in class and community and academic achievement.
2. Outstanding Student Growth - Recognizing the student who has shown exceptional growth in academics, conduct, and citizenship during the course of the year.
3. Best Class Attendance - Recognizing the student with best class attendance.
4. Best Synagogue Attendance - Recognizing the student with the best record of service attendance.

DISCIPLINE

Each child is expected to maintain a high standard of conduct in the classroom in order to ensure maximum progress for the child and the class as a whole. In the event of difficulties, parents may be contacted to work with the school administrator to help improve the individual child's conduct.

1. DRESS

We expect our students to dress appropriately while attending **synagogue services**. All students should wear appropriate clothing that reflects the dignity and respect of being in the synagogue. Students in Religious School classes should take cognizance of the fact when choosing their manner of dress, that they are entering a synagogue, which is a holy place. Boys must wear a kippah at all times. Heelies are not allowed due to safety reasons.

FOOD

NO FOOD can be brought into the building except on special occasions. This must be cleared ahead of time with the school principal and/or rabbi.

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP PROCEDURES

For maximum safety of the children, we ask your cooperation with the following drop-off and pick-up procedures for Religious School.

- All students will enter the building by way of the school entrance located on the east side of the building.
- All traffic must flow by entering Sunbeam Road on the west side of the building proceeding across the front of the building from west to east and continuing out from south to north by way of Sunbeam Road.
- Students who ride together should stay together for pick up, rather than block traffic. Please tell your children. Please be patient and wait your turn - safety is more important than a few minutes in line

BETH SHALOM RELIGIOUS SCHOOL CURRICULUM

GENERAL INFORMATION

PRIMARY DEPARTMENT

Our goal in the Primary Department is to create a warm, positive Jewish atmosphere where the 4, 5, and 6 year olds can begin to identify with their great heritage - Judaism.

Children meet for three hours on Sunday from 9 am to 12:00 pm. They learn prayers and blessings and listen to stories about Jewish heroes. They are introduced to the Jewish holidays, their symbols, and their ceremonies. The children learn to express themselves in many ways with the help of our talented teachers. In Music, our children learn about Israel, holidays, and Jewish identity by singing Jewish songs. In Dance students learn about and connect to the culture of Israel by participating in authentic Israeli folk dances. And in Drama, students learn how to act out the greatest stories of our tradition, transforming the stories from something from a book into something they themselves have experienced.

In addition, the children learn about important mitzvot like tzedakah, "Jewish Sharing", kindness to animals, and Jewish environmental concepts. The children have parties, play games, and simply enjoy being in their synagogue. Students also attend Junior Congregation on selected Shabbats and begin to learn the Sabbath Service.

Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Subjects:

- Bible (from Creation to Moses)
- Jewish Holidays
- Synagogue Rituals and Symbols
- First and Second Grade Subjects:
- Bible (Birth of Moses to entering the land of Israel)
- Holidays, Customs, and Ceremonies
- Prayers and Blessings
- Hebrew Reading Readiness

SECONDARY DEPARTMENT

Judaica education is presented to grades two through seven, incorporating a multi-media approach similar to the primary grades, with an emphasis in history, life cycle, and home rituals. Other subjects include a more in-depth study of holidays, Israel, mitzvoth, and the weekly Torah portion (parsha). These students also begin to take a more active role in leading portions of the service during Junior Congregation.

Our Kitah Alef and Kitah Bet classes concentrate on the study of Hebrew reading and writing, and Home Prayer skills. Participation in games, songs, and prayer encourages every child to enjoy as they excel.

Kitah Gimel, Kitah Daled, and Kitah Hay students study Hebrew Reading and Comprehension using a tefilah based approach. This is designed to strengthen their reading skills and understanding of various prayers. Home Prayer, Tefilah and Synagogue Skills are practiced in class.

HOLIDAYS

On all grade levels, holidays, Jewish customs, and ceremonies are explained at their appropriate times. Our curriculum is graded and sequential. Because it is sequential, what students learn in Kindergarten will only be compounded in First Grade and not specifically repeated. This holds true for every grade in the school. For example, although they learn about Rosh Hashanah every year, each year more knowledge will be added to their growing understanding of our tradition.

CURRENT EVENTS

Jewish current events are discussed on all grade levels as they happen in Israel, in the United States and elsewhere - so that the student can identify with Jews and Judaism universally.

TZEDAKAH

Tzedakah is a Hebrew word meaning righteousness or justice. True righteousness means that we help those who need our assistance. Thus, money is collected from students each day of class and is then distributed throughout the year to worthy funds, causes, and charities. The concept of giving *tzedakah* is basic to Judaism, and the participation of our students in this act of kindness teaches them that it is the right and righteous thing to do.

STANDARDS FOR BAR AND BAT MITZVAH

The Beth Shalom Religious School provides a basis on which to build skills necessary for a Bar or Bat Mitzvah. It will be the parents responsibility to provide additional tutoring for Bar or Bat Mitzvah. The Beth Shalom Religious School Administration will assist in procuring a tutor.

To become Bar or Bat Mitzvah on the Sabbath, a student must have attended at least 80% of religious school classes with regularity for at least four consecutive years immediately prior to the Bar or Bat Mitzvah. In the event a congregant has not been a member of Beth Shalom for the above-mentioned 4-year period, the student must present a certified record of equivalent religious school education from the previous religious school. In addition to regular religious school instruction, students preparing for their Bar/Bat Mitavahs will be required to attend Bar/Bat Mitzvah lessons which begin approximately nine to twelve months in advance of the date. Students who do not meet these requirements may be eligible for a weekday simcha at the discretion of the Rabbi and the Education Committee.

At the time of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah, all candidates must be students, regularly enrolled and in good standing, at the Beth Shalom Religious School or in a special program approved by the rabbi and school administrator.

After the Bar or Bat Mitzvah, the student is expected to remain in his or her academic class program at the Religious School for the remainder of that school year.

For further information, please refer to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah handbook.

BEIT MIDRASH JAX - A COMMUNITY HEBREW HIGH SCHOOL

Beit Midrash Jacksonville is a community High school open to all of Jacksonville's Jewish teenagers in grades 8-12. Classes meet weekly on Wednesday evening. We encourage all of our families to enroll their post-Bnai Mitzvah children in this important program. The school is run by the Jacksonville Jewish Federation, with a board comprised of representatives from area synagogues. Registration packets and class schedules are mailed annually.

For more information, call the Federation at 448-5000 ext, 210.

GOALS

To develop in the student a spiritual, moral, and ethical sensitivity in order that:

- She/He may lead a spiritual, moral, and ethical life.
- She/He be willing to fight any form of prejudice or discrimination.
- She/He be willing to become involved in the collective efforts of the Jewish Community.

To imbue the student with curiosity for Jewish knowledge by:

- Transmitting to him/her knowledge and understanding of our history, literature, culture, and synagogue skills.
- Providing him/her knowledge of the contributions that Jews have made to world civilization, both past and present.

To infuse the student with love and pride in Judaism by:

- Helping the student understand the exalted aim of Judaism and the differences between its denominations.
- Providing the student with knowledge and understanding of Judaism and infusing him/her with a willingness to follow its teachings.

To provide the student with knowledge and understanding of the uniqueness

- (K'dusha) of Judaism and how it differs from other religions by:
- Helping the student understand other religions, especially of the people with whom there is daily contact.
- Infusing the student with the desire to date and marry within Judaism.
- Fostering in the student an intelligent and wholesome attitude toward non-Jews.

To infuse the student with a commitment to the welfare of all Jews, wherever they may be and a willingness to help in their plight by:

- Providing the student with historical knowledge and understanding of ancient and modern Israel.
- Imbuing the student with a strong love and commitment to Eretz Yisrael and its people.
- Informing the student about the history of anti-Semitism.
- Informing the student of the enormity of the Shoah.
- Informing the student of the subtle and overt expressions of anti-Semitism in America.
- Informing the student of the plight of the Jews in Muslim countries.

To infuse the student with a willingness to participate in activities aimed for the improvement of living conditions for Jews everywhere.

ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

YOUTH GROUPS

There are a number of active Jewish youth groups in our community and we encourage our students to become involved. As our school grows, we plan to start our own groups. For more information, please contact the Education Committee Chairperson.

CAMP RAMAH

Probably the most effective and enjoyable tool in Jewish education today is Camp Ramah. Based on a unique concept, Ramah has become the backbone of sound Jewish education in the Conservative movement, and in fact has been copied by other Jewish groups in the last few years.

Ramah is a summer camp like any summer camp, except that the official language of the camp is Hebrew (the children naturally tend to speak English among themselves) and there is an acute, but natural consciousness of Judaism, which is part of the air of the camp. There is a study program, but in a setting which attracts a child. Camp Ramah is designed for all of our children, both students who

attend secular schools during the day and Hebrew school in the afternoon and students who attend Jewish day schools like our local Martin Gottlieb Day School.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Beth Shalom makes scholarships available for Camp Ramah to financially assist our families in providing intensive Jewish experiences for their children. The Debbie Katz Camp Ramah Fund was established for this purpose

In order to qualify for a scholarship, a student must be actively participating and in good standing in our school program. The following elements will be considered:

- The financial need of the student
- The student's attitude
- The student's scholastic standing
- Service to the Congregation

Students interested in receiving a scholarship should submit their request with a formal letter to the Scholarship Committee. Scholarship candidates may be interviewed and will be notified of the decision of the Scholarship Committee by mail. We encourage all students and their parents to avail themselves of this opportunity. Your active financial support of our scholarship program will be of great help and very deeply appreciated.