

Beit Midrash Frequently Asked Questions

Contents

What are *Beit Midrash's* Hours?..... 2

Where and When are Hebrew classes Held?2

Who Is Eligible for *Beit Midrash*?..... 2

How Can I Register for *Beit Midrash*? 2

How Does the *Beit Midrash* Program Work? 3

What is Pre-Confirmation? 3

What is Confirmation?..... 4

What is Post-Confirmation?..... 4

What Youth Group Programs Do You Offer? 5

What is Yachad? 5

What is Included with My Registration Fee? 5

How Much Does Beit Midrash Cost? 6

Are Scholarships or Payment Plans Available for Beit Midrash? 6

Are Refunds Available?..... 7

What Does *Beit Midrash* Mean?.....7

What Are Beit Midrash's Hours?

Preschool (3 & 4 year olds)	Temple Beth-El	Sunday, 9:30 am – 11:00 am <i>(optional childcare 11:00-12:00)</i> Beginning August 27
Beit Midrash (Kindergarten – Grade 7) Includes Hebrew time for Grades 3-6	Temple Beth-El	Sunday, 9:30 am – 12:00 noon Beginning August 27
Pre-Confirmation (Grade 8-9)	Temple Beth-El	Wednesday, 6:30-8:30 Beginning September 6
Confirmation (Grade 10)	Temple Beth-El	Wednesday, 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm Beginning September 6
Post-Confirmation (Grades 11-12)	Locations vary	Wednesday, 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm Beginning October 15

Where and When Are Hebrew Classes Held?

Wednesday Midweek Hebrew	Temple Beth-El	Wednesday, 4:30 – 6:00 pm Beginning September 6
Tuesday Midweek Hebrew	Zoom	Tuesday times as assigned

Who is Eligible for *Beit Midrash*?

Enrollment in *Beit Midrash* is open to students in Preschool through Grade 12 whose families are members of Temple Beth-El or committed to Judaism and enrolled in our Conversion program. Our preschool class is open for students who will be at least **age 3 by September 1 of 2022**. We kindly ask that all preschool students be potty trained prior to enrolling.

How Can I Register for *Beit Midrash*?

Log into your Shulcloud account at beth-elsa.shulcloud.com account and click on Enroll In School Now. Please contact our Religious School Administrator, Sara Planto, at sara@beth-elsa.org if you have questions about the enrollment process.

How Does the *Beit Midrash* Program Work?

We proudly offer a completely customizable learning experience for our students. During their class time on Sunday mornings, students learn in interactive, experiential classroom settings with our caring and experienced faculty.

Our Preschool class explores Judaism through their senses in a combined 3- and 4-year-old class. Students will have the chance to experience all Temple has to offer with visits from our clergy, holiday celebrations, and plenty of time to explore Judaism through free play.

In Kindergarten through Seventh Grade, students will select their own classes from a yearly selection to understand how Judaism intersects their interests. Science, theater, reading, – all of these can help our students have fun while they learn about Judaism and our sacred community.

During their eight years in our program, students will enjoy classes in 9 content areas selected by our education committee as vital to understanding modern Reform Jewish life: community, Jewish values, holidays, Hebrew and liturgy, Israel, sacred texts, Jewish culture, Jewish history, Jewish lifecycle celebrations, and God-concepts.

Students working toward becoming *bar, bat, or b'nai mitzvah* will complete one to three classes in each content area throughout the course of their studies, with ample room for free choice along the way.

Classes are offered based on three age groups:

- Primary (Grades K-2)
- Intermediate (Grades 3-5)
- Advanced (Grades 6-7)

Following registration, families receive an email with a class selection form so students can pick the offerings that most appeal to their interests.

What is Pre-Confirmation?

Following their *Beit Midrash* studies, our students matriculate to our Confirmation program, beginning with our Preconfirmation series. During Grades 8 and 9 our students take on a more difficult and nuanced curriculum. This group spends two years learning our material – Grade 8 will study Comparative Religion and Jewish Culture and Grade 9 will explore of the history and beliefs of Reform Jews. This seminar-style class introduces students to the challenges and exciting learning of their upcoming Confirmation year. Grade 8 is led by Billy Bloomberg, Director of Youth Programming and Informal Education and Grade 9 is led by Rabbi Marina Yergin.

What is Confirmation?

In our congregation's history, Confirmation (Grade 10) stands as the pinnacle of a student's Jewish education and a graduation of sorts from our program. In Reform tradition, it is a significant lifecycle event. This year of study and ceremony marks an academic milestone in the student's on-going Jewish learning and signifies their informed affirmation of their commitments as Jews.

Students meet weekly with Senior Rabbi Mara Nathan and take on a curriculum that focuses on varied, Jewish concepts of God and are challenged to develop their personal understanding of what a relationship with God means to them.

After they complete these studies, students lead a Confirmation service as a class, linking themselves to Judaism and the Confirmands who came before.

What is Post-Confirmation?

Following their Confirmation, students are encouraged to keep learning with us. Post-Confirmation students meet once a month throughout the city of San Antonio from 12:30-2:00 pm. This seminar-style series allows students to use Judaism as a relevant lens through which to see the world around them. Led by Billy Bloomberg, Director of Youth Programming and Informal Education, students will discuss issues that impact their lives and join as voices for justice in the broader Jewish community. Past sessions have included panel discussions featuring Jews of Color, training to discuss anti-Semitism and answering questions about Israel on high school and college campuses, and discussions about the Jewish perspectives on topics like the environment, vaping, body image, and food insecurity.

The highlight of the Post-Confirmation years is a trip to Washington, D.C. We are proud to offer our students the opportunity to attend the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (RAC)'s L'Taken Social Justice Seminar. During this trip, we bring these students to Washington, DC where they meet with their members of Congress to discuss the issues with which they are concerned. Students join with other teens around the country to learn about the issues the RAC addresses and are trained in how to do this sacred justice work while they tour and enjoy a weekend in our nation's capital. The cost of the trip is an additional expense.

What Youth Group Programs Do You Offer?

Temple Beth-El sponsors five youth group options for students as they grow up. Most groups will meet once in the fall and once in the spring with other family programming provided throughout the year!

Families with Young Children programming is designed for children 7 & under. Join us for Tot Havdalah, Family Friendly Shabbat Morning Services, Sunday Funday (Pre-K and under), and childcare on select Shabbats.

Club Rishon is for students in Kindergarten through Grade 2, which meets up for fun family events after Beit Midrash!

Club Chaverim is our youth group for students in Grades 3-5. Club Chaverim activities and service projects are after Beit Midrash!

Jr. SAFTY includes students in Grades 6 and 7. During Jr. SAFTY students bond in preparation for their b'nai mitzvah years and for our senior youth group, SAFTY. Jr. SAFTY members will meet to find fun and exciting ways to celebrate their Judaism.

SAFTY is our senior youth group, which includes students in grades 8-12. SAFTY members meet monthly to spend time with their temple friends, doing community service and volunteer projects as representatives of Temple Beth-El. As members of NFTY-TOR (National Federation of Temple Youth – Texas/Oklahoma Region) our members can connect with other Reform Jewish Teens throughout Texas and the USA. On a regional level, they attend NFTY-TOR programming around the state.

If you would like to register your child(ren) for a Youth Group, you can opt-in as a part of Beit Midrash registration or by contacting Billy Bloomberg, Director of Youth Programming and Informal Education 210-733-9135 x112 or bbloomberg@beth-elsa.org.

What is Yachad?

Yachad is our Parent organization. Our Yachad parents help our teachers by chaperoning local field trips, helping set up for Family Education days, and providing *b'nai mitzvah* members of our school community and holiday gifts for our faculty.

What is Included with My Registration Fee?

Your *Beit Midrash* registration fee covers all student instructional materials and school supplies. It also covers our non-traditional supplies like ingredients for students in cooking classes and art supplies for students in fine art classes.

Included for students in Grades 2-6 is a *Shabbat* weekend retreat at URJ Greene Family Camp in Bruceville, TX. We take care of transportation, chaperones, lodging, meals and snacks, and activities all weekend long.

Included for students in Grades 3-6 is a midweek Hebrew class.

How Much Does Beit Midrash Cost?

Our *Beit Midrash* registration fees listed below are based on the number of instructional hours and include materials and activities for your child(ren's) grade. The fee is subsidized by the entire congregation to provide a more affordable expense for families.

Preschool (ages 3-4)	\$385
Kindergarten-Grade 1	\$495
Grade 2	\$690
Grades 3,4,5,6	\$800
Grade 7	\$600
Pre-Confirmation (Grade 8-9)	\$600
Confirmation (Grade 10)	\$690
Post-Confirmation (Grade 11-12)	\$180 *Trip will be a separate and additional cost and is optional.

Are Scholarships or Payment Plans Available for *Beit Midrash*?

Yes! Absolutely! We understand that families have expenses, and **we are committed to making sure all our families can enroll regardless of financial circumstances.**

Many families set up payment plans for Religious School. These plans are interest-free, and you can set up the installments in a variety of ways. For more information, contact Temple's Controller, Michael Ringel, michael@beth-elsa.org.

Additionally, we have scholarships available to families who need financial assistance. The form is available as part of our *Beit Midrash* registration or by contacting Director of Congregational Learning, Ellen Barshop, at ebarshop@beth-elsa.org.

All financial arrangements are kept confidential.

Are Refunds Available?

We are pleased to be able to offer full refunds of your registration fee until August 1, 2023. If a student drops out because of a move out-of-town or illness prior to the end of the first semester, we can offer a prorated fee and refund the fee for the second semester.

We regret that, otherwise, we are unable to offer refunds.

What Does *Beit Midrash* Mean?

Beit Midrash is the Hebrew for “House of Study.” Early rabbinic literature refers to synagogue buildings as serving three purposes: to be a *beit t’filah* (house of worship), a *beit k’neset* (a house of gathering), and a *beit midrash* (house of study). Designating spaces for study has long been part of Jewish tradition. Our name refers to our hopes that we will be more than a school for our students – just teaching classes and assigning grades. What we are is a community of learners, working together to discover the impact that Judaism can have on every aspect of our lives and how we can impact the Jewish world in return. **At *Beit Midrash*** we explore Judaism in our own ways, with each student, like the rabbinic scholars in early centuries, finding what excites us and pursuing those interests.