



Beit Midrash Family Handbook 2020-2021

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Welcome to Beit Midrash

On behalf of the faculty and staff at Temple Beth-El, welcome! We are glad your family has joined us as partners in your child's Jewish Education. Together, we will continue to work as a team to ensure that all of the students in our school foster lasting and meaningful relationships with one another, their teachers, and our rich religious traditions.

We are in a new world and are making every effort to meet these challenges with thought, data, and innovation. We've also got a new name! For years and years we've called ourselves Religious School, but we've changed our name to Temple Beth-El's Beit Midrash. Synagogue buildings are meant to act as 3 things: a beit t'filah, a house of prayer, a beit k'nesset, a house of gathering, and a beit midrash, a house of study.

This name change recognizes that religious school is a misnomer – we are more than a school, teaching classes and giving grades. We are a community of learners, working together to find what impact Judaism can have on our lives and how we can make an impact on the Jewish world. We will study what is important to our congregation, our families, and ourselves and explore these topics in a Jewish lens in our own Beit Midrash.

Within these pages we'll outline our new curricular model, discuss our phased-in plan for in-person learning, and highlight the important details you'll need to know for the year.

We proudly feature:

- A host of classes for students to choose from for themselves, based on their own interests
- A guide and administrative support to keep with a road map on which to grow their Jewish literacy.
- 9 key-content areas (Community, Holidays, Mitzvot and Values, Tanach, God, Israel, Culture, Lifecycle, and History) that students explore in myriad ways throughout their studies.
- Formal Hebrew instruction in grades 3-6 with options for private tutoring, family tutoring, and small group classes.
- Classes for students of all interests from Minecraft to cooking to science.
- Access to the Bendiner Library and its fantastic, contemporary collection of books to check out.
- Family education opportunities for each grade level to build community.
- An inclusion specialist who ensures that all students are given access to the curriculum as well as the social and spiritual energy of our school.

We surely have a fabulous year ahead of us!



Leah Apothaker, Director of Congregational Learning

How Classes Work

Guided Learning

Imagine your cell phone. It is uniquely yours, full of your photos, apps, and contacts. Consider why you purchased it. Maybe it was for the camera quality, maybe for the price, maybe because it makes such great phone calls.

Though we all have phones that we rely on every day, every phone is used for different purposes. It was designed to allow you to use it in the ways that make sense for you. Jewish education should be the same.

Our program is designed to be like your phone. Students will design their course work from Kindergarten through Grade 7 to see how Judaism interacts with their preestablished interests. Science, theater, book clubs, online gaming – all of these can be made Jewish.

During the course of their 8 years in our program, students will enjoy classes in 9 key-content areas. Students working toward becoming bar or bat mitzvah will complete one to three classes from each content area throughout the course of their studies, with ample room for free choice. Our guidance chart is on page 3. At the start year, families will receive an update with what each student has completed to help plan for the year ahead.

Classes are offered based on three age groups:

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

After you register, you'll receive an email with a class selection form. Students can rank their choices for what to take that year or leave it up to us. You'll be placed in classes depending on what you've completed, how many students select that option, and if it will be offered again in the coming year. So pick what fits you! Stick with your friends or siblings, pick a teacher you think is totally fun, choose a subject that you love – in our *Beit Midrash* we are the tool that helps you design your own unique program.

Guidance Chart

Community

Classes designed to help students understand that we are part of local community and their role in the larger American and global Jewish community. (2 courses)

Culture

Classes designed to let students experience the colorful culture of Judaism. (2 courses)

God

Classes designed to give students space to openly discuss their thoughts and feelings about God. Students will learn that throughout history Jews have explored their relationship with God. (1 course)

History

Classes designed to help students develop a meaningful identification with Jews past and present through studying events, people, and their own families. (1 course)

Holidays

Classes designed to help students familiarize themselves with the rituals and traditions observed around our calendar of Jewish holidays. (3 courses)

Israel

Classes designed to help students understand the connection between the Jewish people and Israel through learning about the land, the state, and the people who live there. (1 course)

Lifecycle

Classes designed to teach students how Jews mark passages of time and season through their lives and the Jewish moments that help define them. (2 courses)

Mitzvot

Classes designed to help students practice our ethical and ritual commandments and connect them to the values they and their families hold. (3 courses)

Tanakh

Classes designed to help students learn what is in the *Tanakh* (the Hebrew Bible) and the other sacred texts from which Judaism originated. (2 courses)

Free Choice

Students who participate in the *Beit Midrash* with the goal of becoming bat or bar mitzvah will be able to complete classes in this guide with 3 courses to spare to be used as they progress when they are excited about a course or teacher and have already completed that content area. (3 courses)

Course Offerings

PRIMARY

2020-2021 Trimester One

WELCOME TO THE BEIT (COMMUNITY)

Calla Pfeifer-Campos

Take a journey through the wonderful world of Jewish stories and learn about Jewish community and what we do as young members of it. Along the way we will meet some of the fantastic people and places that make Temple Beth-El such a special place.

LET'S EXPLORE FALL HOLIDAYS (HOLIDAYS)

Carla Keegan

Do fun activities as we learn about Jewish holidays. This course will engage emerging readers and help them discover their own connections to the holidays of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Simchat Torah, and Hanukkah. Each week we explore the meaning of a holiday, its objects, and rituals, and read a retelling of the holiday origins. Perfect for students who love to read!

TORAH CRAFTS FOR LITTLE HANDS (TANAKH)

Sarah Hurdelbrink

Calling all crafters! Grab your glue sticks and googly eyes and join us to learn all of the Bible's most memorable stories. Build a popsicle stick ark for Noah and the animals, learn to weave a paper basket for Baby Moses, make beard to trick Isaac, and more. All craft supplies will be provided.

LET'S DISCOVER KINDNESS (MITZVOT)

Cindy Berman

It seems that the world needs more kindness, and now more than ever. But what is kindness, and how do we develop it in ourselves and others? Together, we explore the character traits that contribute to kindness, such as empathy, gratitude, and respect through a Jewish lens. Students will use role-playing, mindfulness activities, personal reflection, and more to explore their emotional responses to the themes and begin to foster those traits in themselves.

INTERMEDIATE

2020-2021 Trimester One

FALL HOLIDAY KITCHEN (CULTURE)

Amy Strickland

Cook with Bubbe! In this class, you'll explore the taste and smells of the Jewish holiday kitchen making Bubbe Strickland's best recipes with her. Apple cake, potato latkes, jelly donuts, matzah ball soup, and more are at your finger tips. Ingredient lists will be sent in advance so you can have everything on hand.

sTORAHTELLING THEATER (TANAKH)

Erica Schoenberg

Let the Torah come to life! Work with a real theater expert to rehearse and record a digital performance for a Torah story of the class's choice! Improve your acting and Torah knowledge at the same time.

Course Offerings

INTERMEDIATE

2020-2021 Trimester One

MINECRAFT: WHAT MAKES A JEWISH COMMUNITY? (COMMUNITY)

Cory Palmer

Calling all blockheads! Together we'll learn about the things the Talmud says a city needs to have in order for Jewish people to live there, then we'll work in teams to build those things in Minecraft. From hospitals to synagogues to bathrooms, let's learn about our community while we build a virtual one together.

BEING A MENSCH (MITZVOT)

Rachael Hodes

Jewish values are a great foundation to learn menshliket, a Yiddish expression meaning compassion for ourselves and others. In this class you'll explore Jewish values like wisdom, caring for you body, not embarrassing others, pursuit of justice, protecting the environment, working toward joy, and pursuit of knowledge, through games, discussions, and debates.

ADVANCED

2020-2021 Trimester One

PEOPLE OF THE BOOK CLUB: ALL THREE STOOGES (CULTURE)

Justin Gaston

Together we'll read and discuss All Three Stooges by Erica S. Perl, the winner of the National Jewish Book Award for Children's Literature and a Sydney Taylor Book Award Honoree for older readers. Noah is a typical kid trying to get through the 7th grade and his bar mitzvah. When his friends father dies, he attempts to console him with the one thing that has always worked in the past: humor. Equal parts funny, honest, and affecting, this story, steeped in Jewish traditions and comedic history, will help us understand our own traditions and friendships. Book will be provided. Content Warning: Suicide

MY FAMILY STORY: JEWISH HISTORY IN THE MAKING (HISTORY)

Alana Kardon

We're all Jewish History makers. Learn to research your own family history to tell the story of your Jewish family today. Using an artifact you have, you'll discover your family's Jewish story and do a project to share it with the class. A great class for the whole family!

PARTNERS WITH GOD (GOD)

David Rubenstein

As Jews, we are part of a covenantal relationship with God, but what really are the promises that make up that partnership and how do we live them? As Jews we require more than just faith – our relationship with God is based on actions. Together we'll learn about the partnership between God and the Jewish people and the how and why to live that promise.

Course Offerings

PRIMARY

2020-2021 Trimester Two

SING-A-LONG JEWISH SONGS (CULTURE)

Calla Pfeifer-Campos

Sing and learn popular Jewish songs! From prayers to Hebrew letters, there's so much we can learn about our culture through music!

LET'S EXPLORE SPRING HOLIDAYS (HOLIDAYS)

Carla Keegan

Do fun activities as we learn about Jewish holidays. This course will engage emerging readers and help them discover their own connections to the holidays of *Tu Bishvat*, *Purim*, *Passover*, *Yom Haatzmaut*, and *Shavuot*. Each week we explore the meaning of a holiday, its objects, and rituals, and read a retelling of the holiday origins. Perfect for students who love to read!

SHABOOM! (MITZVOT)

Sarah Hurdelbrink

Using BimBam's animated Shaboom! Series, learn important values for Jewish people to practice. Together, we'll watch the show, think about what it means to us, and practice what we learn with fun activities and games!

BLFF: BEST LIFECYCLE FRIENDS FOREVER (LIFECYCLE)

Cindy Berman

Create a new friend and help them learn all about what it means to be Jewish. In this class you'll create your own lifecycle buddy and help it build a Jewish life. Learn all about how we get our names, why we become bar/bat mitzvah, what makes a Jewish wedding special, and how to say goodbye to people we love.

INTERMEDIATE

2020-2021 Trimester Two

HEBREW THROUGH MOVEMENT (CULTURE)

Cory Palmer

Learn beginner modern Hebrew by listening, hearing, and responding. Using strategies of Total Physical Response, learn in a positive, playful, and meaningful way, creating a link between learning, moving and doing.

MINECRAFT: WHAT MAKES A JEWISH COMMUNITY? (COMMUNITY)

Justin Gaston

Calling all blockheads! Together we'll learn about the things the Talmud says a city needs to have in order for Jewish people to live there, then we'll work in teams to build those things in Minecraft. From hospitals to synagogues to bathrooms, let's learn about our community while we build a virtual one together.

Course Offerings

INTERMEDIATE

2020-2021 Trimester Two

ISRAEL THROUGH SCIENCE (ISRAEL)

Alana Kardon

Learn about the state of Israel using the environment as a backdrop. Study rocks, weather, energy, and life science as a means to understand the physical place so important to the Jewish people. Learn with a real science educator!

MY FAMILY STORY: JEWISH HOLIDAYS IN THE MAKING (HISTORY)

Rachael Hodes

We're all Jewish History makers. Learn to research your own family history to tell the story of your Jewish family today. Using an artifact you have, you'll discover your family's Jewish story and do a project to share it with the class. A great class for the whole family!

ADVANCED

2020-2021 Trimester Two

BEST OF BUBBE'S KITCHEN (CULTURE)

Amy Strickland

Is there a Jewish recipe you've always wanted to learn to cook? Can you not get enough of the oneg goodies at Temple? Learn to make them all in Best of Bubbe's Kitchen! Each week students will vote on what to learn to make the following week. Ingredient lists will be sent in advance so you can have everything on hand.

SHAKE OFF THE SALT AND THROW THE MEAT TO THE DOG: WISDOM FROM THE TALMUD (TANAKH)

Jason Miller-Goodman

What should you do if an ox trips while it's running? There's a Jewish law for that! Explore the Talmud, Jewish legal and ethical codes, to learn some of the most hilarious folk sayings from Jewish tradition and how to apply those lessons to your life.

ROCK OF AGES: A HISTORY OF JEWS AND ROCK N' ROLL (HISTORY)

David Rubenstein

For over 100 years, Jews have had a disproportionate pattern of writing the lyrics and music to some of the greatest and most innovative songs ever recorded. This class explores the impact of Jewish musicians from Tin Pan Alley through the Protest years and today.

Course Offerings

PRIMARY

2020-2021 Trimester Three

SHABBAT IN A BOX (HOLIDAYS)

Calla Pfeifer-Campos

Learn about how Jews all over the world celebrate Shabbat while you build your own box full of the items we use to observe. Make candle sticks, a kiddush cup, and a challah cover! All materials will be provided.

GOD'S MAILBOX (GOD)

Sarah Hurdelbrink

Each week we'll talk about God's relationship with us and what it means to be God's partners through stories. Using what we learn, we'll learn to write prayers (in words or art) to God.

LET'S DISCOVER JEWISH VALUES (MITZVOT)

Carla Keegan

Each *mitzvah* is explained in terms children can easily grasp, using questions, activities, stories and poems. Students will explore *tzedakah*, visiting the sick, feeding the hungry, saving the planet, showing respect for all, welcoming guests, being careful with words, and studying Torah.

THE GREAT ISRAEL SCAVENGER HUNT (ISRAEL)

Cindy Berman

Following cryptic instructions contained in a letter from their grandfather, two cousins travel across Israel on an adventurous scavenger hunt in search of special objects and places, including the Israeli flag, a palm tree, and the Western Wall. As they travel, the cousins and students will discover the major cities and extraordinary sites of Israel, the diversity of Israel's people and cultures, our biblical and modern ties with the Jewish homeland, and the geography of Israel.

INTERMEDIATE

2020-2021 Trimester Three

BEST OF BUBBE'S KITCHEN (CULTURE)

Amy Strickland

Is there a Jewish recipe you've always wanted to learn to cook? Can you not get enough of the oneg goodies at Temple? Learn to make them all in Best of Bubbe's Kitchen! Each week students will vote on what to learn to make the following week. Ingredient lists will be sent in advance so you can have everything on hand.

MAKE, CREATE, CELEBRATE: PAINT AND DOODLE YOUR WAY THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS (HOLIDAYS)

Cory Palmer

Use the arts as a vehicle for exploring and experiencing Jewish holidays. Not an artist yet? It's all good! This class is all about self-expression and ideas. We'll learn and explore collage, micrography, water color, found object art, and zen doodling. All supplies are included.

Course Offerings

INTERMEDIATE

2020-2021 Trimester Three

PORTRAITS OF JEWISH AMERICAN HEROES (HISTORY)

Rachael Hodes

Learn about some of the most famous Jewish Americans who have helped change our country and the rest of the world. At the end of class, students will work on an independent project to teach other students about their selected hero. Meet Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner, Steven Spielberg, Harry Houdini, Albert Einstein, Hank Greenberg, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Judith Resnick, and Leonard Nimoy.

BIBLICAL ZOO (TANAKH)

Alana Kardon

Take a virtual tour of the Jerusalem Biblical Zoo each week with a real science and nature educator! The zoo is home to over 270 species of animals and we'll learn about some of them together. From insects, to reptiles, to mammals, learn about the creatures of the Bible who walk the earth with us today and what we can do to protect them.

ADVANCED

2020-2021 Trimester Three

SCHMOOZING, KIBBITZING, SCHLEPING, AND KVELLING: LET'S LEARN YIDDISH (CULTURE)

David Rubenstein

English speakers use a ton of Yiddish words without even knowing it. Learn about the roots of the Yiddish language, how Jews from all over the world spoke it, how it came to America, and what people are doing to try to save it before its lost. And learn some hilarious and practical words along the way.

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS (TANAKH)

Justin Gaston

From Creation to Jacob's Ladder to King David and beyond, the Tanakh and full of inspiration for artists, both contemporary and historically. Explore Art inspired by the Tanakh and create your own masterpiece based on portion of your choosing while learning that biblical interpretation is much more than text study.

JEWISH VALUES IN ACTION (MITZVOT)

Jason Miller-Goodman

Working with a group, you'll learn all about the four avenues of engagement that we can use to make changes we want to see in the world. You will choose a topic you care about and identify a difference you can make. As a group, you will get to present your solution to the Temple Social Action committee who will take YOUR advice on how to help make the world a better place.

Course Offerings

PRECONFIRMATION

GRADE 8 - GRADE 9

Rabbi Yergin

Grades 8-9 begin their Confirmation studies in our Preconfirmation Class. This combined group spends two years learning our material – one year of Reform Jewish History and a second year of Jewish Culture and Comparative Religion. The class is more of a seminar style. Students are challenged to take more difficult and nuanced topics than in years before as they prepare for the challenge of Confirmation.

HEBREW PROGRAM

GRADE 3 - GRADE 6

Goals and Curriculum:

The goals of our Hebrew curriculum are multi-faceted; the primary emphasis is on the study of the *siddur* (prayer book). We strive to balance the need to both *kevah* (the routine) and the *kavanah* (spirituality) of prayer. In order to become fluent participants in a worship service, students learn to decode Hebrew text with accuracy and fluency, gain a working Hebrew vocabulary of approximately 100 words, and develop some basic knowledge of Hebrew grammar. Students also have the opportunity to explore the concepts expressed in Jewish liturgy as they sing and chant many prayers from the evening and morning services.

To achieve these goals, we use the Mitkadem curriculum, a Hebrew program developed by the Union for Reform Judaism. As a highly adaptable program, it allows us to individualize instruction for each student. Students can progress at their own speed allowing our teachers to interact with the students in a more personal manner. Additionally, we offer a Transitional Specialist whose primary function is to work with students who need extra support before joining their grade level or who benefit from small group instruction. Placement with the transitional specialist is possible after meeting with a family and assessing their needs.

HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS

For High School students, we offer 2 courses in addition to our Madrichim program and SAFTY

CONFIRMATION (GRADE 10)

In our Reform tradition, Confirmation is a significant lifecycle event. This ceremony marks an academic milestone in the students' process of Jewish learning and their informed affirmation of their commitments as Jews. Our Confirmation students will have the opportunity to study primarily with Rabbi Nathan and Cantor Berlin to prepare for the Confirmation Service. The Confirmation curriculum focuses on the various ways we think about God and develop a personal understanding of what a relationship with God means.

POST CONFIRMATION (GRADE 11 - GRADE 12)

Students meet once a month from 12:15-1:30. This seminar-style series allows students to use Judaism as a relevant lens through which to see the world around them. Taught by Rabbis Nathan and Yergin, Leah Apothaker, and Ross Halfant, students will discuss issues that impact their lives and join as voices for justice in the broader Jewish community.

Notes on Covid-19

At Temple Beth-El, we take seriously our responsibility to practice *pikuach nefesh* (safe guarding life) and *shmirat haguf* (caring for the body). For the safety of our faculty and families, we meet weekly with the Temple Beth-El COVID-19 Task Force, who have helped us devise the below phased opening plan. Our task force has continued to encourage congregational leadership to reopen our building with the motto, “data, not dates,” in mind. Though it makes it harder to concretely nail down what our year ahead holds, it frees us from the burden of taking inessential risk. We have designed a phased reopening plan, which you can find below. It does not include many dates, but does mention how we will determine it's time to move from phase to phase. As always, I am available to answer any questions. Please contact me at leah@beth-elsa.org with questions or to schedule time to chat.

PHASE 1

- Sept. 13 material pick up day at Temple with socially distant fun and shofar
- Opening Day on October 4th
- All classes are taught online
- School time shortened to 1 hour, Class time shortened to 45 minutes
- All school opening assembly before break-out classes meet
- All school closing song session at the end of the day
- Students sign up for classes of interest, allowing multiple students in one household to take the same class on one device.
- Inclusion specialist to reach out to all families concerned about creating a great learning environment at home!

PHASE 2

- Will begin when the infection rate falls below .3% per 100,000 residents in Bexar county and infection, hospitalization and death rates plateau in county goal range for 14 consecutive days.
- Some classes continue online, some reopen in the Temple building.
- All students who wish to continue online learning have the option to do so.
- Up to 50 people in the Temple at a time
- Required screening, masking, and distancing inside the Temple.
- Return of a limited number of madrichim to help screen students and act as Zoom moderators for students in classes who wish to continue learning from a distance.
- In-person classes last 1 hour
- Teachers given the option to return in person or continue remotely.
- Temple provides any necessary PPE for teacher and madrichim (including masks, gloves, wipes, hand sanitizer, and face shields)
- Any students displaying symptoms of any illness will be sent home and isolated in the childcare room (with a restroom and hand washing station) until the parent picks them up. An adult will supervise at all times.
- No parents allowed in the building during class meetings; water and restroom station provided in the parking lot.
- No more than 10 people (1 teacher, 1 madrich, 8 students) in each learning group and room. This group will remain together all class time.
- Restrooms and building will be maintained and monitored according to CDC and county standards and recommendations.
- Visual aids to help in distancing will be placed in the building (arrows, 6' markers, etc.)
- As much outdoor learning as possible

Notes on Covid-19

PHASE 3

- Will begin when the infection rate falls below .15% per 100,000 residents in Bexar county and infection, hospitalization, and death rates plateau in the low range of county goal for 14 consecutive days.
- Use of the building reopens to all classes but start times will likely be staggered.
- No T'filah (communal prayer) or singing • Required screening, masking, and distancing inside the Temple
- No cooking or eating, though students will be provided with a water bottle each week.
- A limited number madrichim will remain to help screen students and act as Zoom moderators to students who wish to continue learning from home • In-person classes last up to 1 hour
- Teachers return in person
- Temple provides any necessary PPE for teachers (including masks, gloves, wipes, hand sanitizer, and face shields)
- Classrooms arranged so as to keep students as socially distant as possible (desks facing forward and spread out)
- Any students displaying symptoms of any illness will be sent home and isolated in the childcare room (with a restroom and hand washing station) until the parent picks them up. An adult will supervise at all times.
- No parents allowed in the building during class meetings, water and restroom station provided in the parking lot.
- Restrooms and building will be maintained and monitored according to CDC and county standards and recommendations.
- Visual aids to help in distancing will be placed in the building (arrows, 6' markers, etc.)
- No more than 10 people (1 teacher, 1 madrich, 8 students) in each learning group and room. This group will remain together all class time.
- Start and dismissal time to be staggered based on last name of family
- As much outdoor learning as possible

CLASS HOURS

ONLINE SUNDAY (PHASES 1 AND 2)

All classes will begin with Tekes Boker, a morning routine, full of song and energy!

Kindergarten - Grade 9	9:30am-10:30am
Confirmation	11:00am-12:00pm
Post Confirmation	Once a month, 12:00pm-1:00pm

IN-PERSON SUNDAY (PHASES 3 AND 4)

Kindergarten - Grade 9	9:30am-10:30am
Confirmation	10:45am-12:00pm
Post Confirmation	Once a month, 12:00pm-1:15pm

WEEKDAY HEBREW CLASSES

Small Group Class	Wednesdays, 4:30-5:30pm
Family Tutoring	Tues., Wed., Thurs., 4:30 - 6:00 pm, 30 min
Post Confirmation	Tues., Wed., Thurs., 4:30 - 6:00 pm, 30 min

Notes on Covid-19

DROP OFF AND PICK-UP

PHASE 2 AND 3

The covered entrance on the San Pedro side of our building is one we use on Sundays. Ordinarily, we would love you to come inside to say hello, but while we are in phase 2 and 3 of our reopening plan, only students and faculty will be allowed inside our building during school hours. Please remain in your car as students enter and exit. With our shortened hours, we recognize that many will remain on our campus and will make every effort to keep you comfortable while you wait.

PHASE 4

We will continue to use the San Pedro side of our building. Our carpool line moves fairly quickly, but we would love to have you come inside to say hello, come to t'filah, and/or grab a bagel when you drop off your students, especially primary level students. You are welcome to stay and hang out in the building during the school day. Most Sundays, there will be coffee, wifi, and a comfortable room to spend time in. At the end of the day, primary students should be picked up by either a parent or a middle or high school aged sibling. At the end of the day, please come inside and pick up your students in the Chapel at the end of T'filah.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Tuesday, Sept. 8-10

First day of midweek Hebrew Classes

Sunday, Sept. 13

Welcome back supply pick up party in TBE parking lot

Sunday, Oct. 4

First day of Sunday classes and New Family Orientation

Friday, Oct. 9

Simchat Torah and Consecration celebration for new students

General Information

ELIGIBILITY FOR RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

The purpose of the Religious School of Temple Beth-El is to provide a Jewish religious education for Jewish children. A Jewish child is defined as the child of at least one Jewish parent who is being raised as a Jew and is not formally identified with any other religion.

If a child has no Jewish parents but is being raised as a Jew by a Jewish adult, a Conversion Certificate will be issued to him/her privately at the time of his/her *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* or Confirmation.

Synagogue membership is a prerequisite for registration in our Religious School.

In consideration of the developmental skills needed for a smooth adjustment to Religious School, children entering Kindergarten must be age 5 by September 1st.

REGISTRATION FEE

The annual *Beit Midrash* registration fee is non-refundable and includes the costs of instruction, books, materials and supplies, special programs, and a retreat for Grades 2-Confirmation.

In addition to Religious School classes and Hebrew studies, there is a separate *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* fee that is payable during the year of the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*, which helps to offset a portion of the extra costs of tutoring and special services.

SCHOLARSHIPS

We are absolutely committed to providing for the Jewish Education of all of our members' children, regardless of their ability to pay. Scholarship assistance will be available to all families with demonstrated need. Those families receiving scholarship assistance can demonstrate their commitment to the program by ensuring regular attendance (at least 75% of classes).

Scholarships are available for religious school, Jewish camps experiences, and Israel programs. Participation in our Religious School program is a prerequisite for summer program scholarships. All requests for scholarships should be submitted in writing to Rabbi Nathan or Leah Apothaker.

The deadline for applications for religious school is June 1st and the deadline for summer programs is February 1st.

General Information

ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS

We proudly offer a number of different enrichment programs which are part of our weekly schedule. Each is designed to expand and enrich your student's experiences in Jewish learning and living. Holiday assemblies, field trips and Family Education programs and retreats round out our program.

RETREATS (PHASE 4)

Jewish Education can happen almost anywhere, so we believe in bringing students out of the classroom as much as we can. Retreats help students build Jewish identity and help transform our community of peers into a community of friends. Our weekend retreat programs include time for recreation and social activities combined with prayer and study of Judaism. Each class, Grade 2 and up will participate in a retreat that is planned especially for that age group. Grades 2-8 will join with other 2nd-8th graders from the region for an annual retreat held at Greene Family Camp (GFC) in Bruceville, TX. The retreat is planned by camp staff and takes advantage of the best the Jewish camping has to offer. 9th graders join together to engage in *tikun olam* (repairing the world) by volunteering their time and energy to help local San Antonians in a full day of programs. Finally, 10th graders will join with our clergy at their weekend-long Confirmation retreat. Because we've seen the success of experiential, retreat education, we have attempted to make your student's participation in retreats as easy as possible. Fees for retreats are included as part of religious school registration fee and we attempt to provide transportation to the best of our ability. With any questions about retreats, please contact the religious school office. The dates 2020-2021 GFC Camp Retreat for Grade 2-8 are still undetermined and will be provided to us by the camp with the guidance of the URJ COVID taskforce.

FAMILY TZEDEK DAYS

Each of our classes has a unique opportunity to participate in a hands-on mitzvah project with organizations in the community. In the spirit of *tzedek tirdof*, pursuit of justice, and *tikkun olam*, repairing the world, you are invited to participate in our Family TzEDek Days. As families, you will meet the teachers and Ross Halfant, Temple's Social Justice Coordinator, at an assigned service site in or around San Antonio. This is in lieu of their regular Hebrew and Judaics classes at Temple.

SPECIAL NEEDS AND/OR CIRCUMSTANCES

Temple Beth-El is committed to meeting the individual needs of each student. Suzanne Karfiol, our Inclusion Specialist, is in the building whenever classes are in session to work with individual students and to support teachers in ensuring children with special needs in our classrooms have the support they deserve. If your child has a learning disability, medical condition, behavioral disability, or if there has been a special circumstance (birth, death, divorce) in your family, it may affect your student's learning experience. By informing our religious school staff or clergy of your circumstances, you will enable us to help guide your student through religious school in a manner that addresses their individual needs such that we can provide the best possible experience for the whole family.

General Information

B'NAI MITZVAH PROGRAM

Becoming *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* is a significant lifecycle event, shared by a student, family and Temple community. Traditionally, a Jewish person becomes *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* at age 13, but we believe that this *simchah* (joyous event) should be available to anyone age 13 or older who wishes to study Jewish tradition and Hebrew and is willing to take on the commitments of our faith.

In order to qualify for our *B'nai Mitzvah* program, students should complete four years of Judaic and Hebrew education, including regular attendance at Sunday and mid-week classes and enrollment through their *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* school year. In doing so, students will be able to decode Hebrew with a certain degree of proficiency.

Those who wish to become *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* and who, because of extenuating circumstances, are unable to participate in the traditional Hebrew program should reach out to Leah (210-733-9135 x105, leah@beth-elsa.org) for information on how to proceed. We will work with you to ensure your student is able to reach this milestone in his or her Jewish life.

A two-part *B'nai Mitzvah Shabbaton* is scheduled for all students in Grade 6 and their parents. This is a chance for your family to meet with the clergy to understand the steps involved in our program from study to celebration, learn about our MitzvahQuest mitzvah project system, and discuss their feelings about preparing for and embracing life as a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*.

STUDENTS ATTENDING THE ELEANOR KOLITZ HEBREW LANGUAGE ACADEMY

We are happy to welcome students who attend EKHLA to be part of our learning community at Temple as well. EKHLA students devote additional hours to Hebrew and are likely to have strong reading skills. As part of our *B'nei Mitzvah* program, they might be exempt on a case-by-case basis from attending Hebrew instruction, particularly during Grade 3. If you think your child might qualify for this exemption, please contact Leah or the Religious School office.

STAY IN TOUCH

Director of Congregational Learning:	Leah Apothaker
Phone:	(210) 733-9135, ext. 105
E-mail:	leah@beth-elsa.org

Education Administrator:	Sara Planto
Phone:	(210) 733-9135, ext. 108
E-mail:	sara@beth-elsa.org

General Information

IMPORANT NOTES

- Please let us know when your child will be absent by calling the Religious School office or Sara at 210-733-9135 x108
- If you're running late for pick up, please give us a call. You can either use the Temple line or call Sara's cell phone at (210) 260-8520. Students will be waiting for you in the Education office.
- If your child has an allergy or other condition that might require medication during religious school, please help us make arrangements to keep those remedies on hand. If your child carries an Epi-Pen, please send that to school in a ziploc bag along with clearly written instructions including your child's name.
- If your child is being picked up by someone other than a parent, please let us know in advance so we can make sure your child has a safe way home. Students must be picked up by a known adult; we will not send home students in cabs or rideshares without a parent present.
- Please contact us in advance if your child needs to leave school early. In these circumstances, please plan to come inside to pick up your student.
- We're happy to have your child bring a friend to class. Please let us know in advance so that we are sure to have precautionary forms on hand for all of our guests. This helps us keep everyone safe.
- To cut down on cell phone use in the classroom, we ask that you please use our office numbers to reach your students while they are in class.
- Be on the lookout for regular, grade-level updates of school happenings from Sara. Be sure to add sara@beth-elsa.org to your list of safe senders since these updates will be your main source of information about upcoming events.

A FINAL NOTE

We want you to feel comfortable and confident about your child's Jewish education. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Leah. We want to work with you to allay your concerns and provide the best possible experience for your entire family. Thank you for entrusting us with your child's religious education. We look forward to sharing this journey with you!



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